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COME AND WELCOME
TO
J E S U S C H R I S T .

COME AND WELCOME
TO
J E S U S C H R I S T :
OR, THE
GOSPEL INVITATION.

BY
JOHN BUNYAN,
AUTHOR OF THE PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

And they shall come which were ready to perish.—*Ioa. xxvii. 13.*

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PREFACE.

THERE are few men whose writings have been more honored in the Christian world, or more distinguished for usefulness, than those of JOHN BUNYAN. His remarkable life, the simplicity, faithfulness, and success, with which he preached the Gospel, and his deep acquaintance with the windings of the human heart, all combine to give a peculiar interest to the productions of his pen. His *Pilgrim's Progress*, especially, seems to have gained universal popularity. The delineations of character in his writings are so true to life, and so accordant with Scripture representations, that the reader sees some features of his own heart in almost every page. It is this that makes his works so universally acceptable. The reader sees in them, as in a mirror, his own image.

This little volume is designed to set forth the "Gospel Invitation"—the full and free offer of pardon and salvation to all who will come and receive it. The difficulties and objections which the sinner is so ready to raise, are one by one taken up, and their weakness and wickedness clearly exposed. It points out, in a striking manner, the various motives which should lead the sinner to the Savior, and that without delay.

It is believed that this work will be found peculiarly serviceable to inquirers. It is reprinted from an early edition, with some slight omissions, and such changes in the quaint phraseology of the author as would better adapt it to modern taste, and be likely to extend its usefulness. Not the slightest change, however, has been designedly

made in any of the sentiments of the author. The editor would fervently commend it to the blessing of Him whose Spirit has heretofore attended the writings of BUNYAN to thousands and tens of thousands of hearts in every Christian land.

NEW-YORK, May 1, 1836.

COME AND WELCOME
TO
J E S U S C H R I S T .

“ All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out.”—
JOHN vi. 37.

A LITTLE before, in this chapter, you may read that the Lord Jesus walked on the sea, to go to Capernaum, having sent his disciples before in a ship; but the wind was contrary; by which means the ship was hindered in her passage. Now, about the fourth watch of the night, Jesus came walking upon the sea, and overtook them; at the sight of whom they were afraid.

Note. When providences are black and terrible to God's people, the Lord Jesus shows himself to them in a wonderful manner; the which, sometimes they can as little bear, as they can the things that were before terrible to them. They were afraid of the wind and water; they were also afraid of the Lord and Saviour, when he appeared to them in that state.

But he said, “ Be not afraid, it is I.”

Note. That the end of the appearing of the Lord Jesus unto his people (though the manner of his appearing be ever so terrible) is to allay their fears and perplexities.

Then they received him into the ship, and immediately the ship was at land whither it went.

Note. When Christ is absent from his people, they go on but slowly, and with great difficulty; but when he joineth himself unto them, O, how fast they steer their course; how soon they are at their journey's end!

The people now among whom he last preached, when they saw that both Jesus was gone and his disciples, they also took shipping, and came to Capernaum, seeking for Jesus: and when they had found him, they asked him with wonder, "Rabbi, when camest thou hither?" But the Lord Jesus, slighting their compliments, answered, "Verily, verily, ye seek me not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled."

Note. A people may follow Christ far for base ends, as these went after him beyond the sea for loaves. The loaves and fishes will carry a man a great way in religion: yea, will make him venture far for Christ.

Note again. It is not empty professions, but real heartfelt attachment, that crowns the work in the eye of Christ: or thus, it is not the toil and business of professors, but their love to him, that makes him approve of them.

Note again. When men shall look for friendly entertainment at Christ's hand, (if their hearts be insincere,) even then will they meet with a check and rebuke. "Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled."

Ye observe again, he doth not refuse to give even to these, good counsel ; he bids them labor for the meat that endureth to eternal life. Oh, how willing is Jesus Christ to have even those professors that come to him with pretenses only, come to him sincerely, that they may be saved !

The text, you will find, is after much discourse he had held with, and about these false-hearted followers ; and it is uttered by the Lord Jesus, at the conclusion of the whole ; and intimates, that since they were professors in pretense only, and therefore such as his soul could not delight in, that he would content himself with that sincere and chosen remnant which his Father had bestowed upon him. As if he should say, I am not like to be honored in your salvation ; but the Father hath bestowed upon me a people, and they shall come to me in truth, and in them will I be satisfied. The text before may be called Christ's repose ; in the fulfilling whereof, he resteth himself content, after much labor and many sermons spent as it were in vain. As he saith by the prophet, " I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for naught, and in vain." Isa. xlix. 4.

But as there he saith, " My judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God," so in the text he saith, " All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." By these words, therefore, the Lord Jesus comforted himself under the consideration of the dissimulation of some of his followers. He also thus betook himself to rest under the consideration of the

little effect that his ministry had in Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida: "I thank thee, O Father," said he, "Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them to babes; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Matt. xi. 25. Luke x. 21.

The text, in the general, consists of two parts, and has special respect to the Father and the Son; as also to their joint management of the salvation of the people. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

The first part of the text (as is evident) respects the Father and his gift: the other part, the Son, and his reception of that gift.

First. For the gift of the Father, there is this to be considered; to wit—

The gift itself; and that it is a gift of certain persons to the Son. The Father giveth, and that gift shall come: And him that cometh. The gift then is of person: the Father giveth persons to Jesus Christ.

Secondly. Next you have the Son's reception of this gift, and that shows itself in these particulars.

1. In his hearty acknowledgment of it to be a gift: "The Father giveth me."

2. In his taking notice, after a solemn manner, of all, and every part of the gift: "All that the Father giveth me."

3. In his resolution to bring them to himself: "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me."

4. And in his determining, that not any thing shall make him dislike them in their coming: "And he that cometh to me, I will in no-wise cast out."

These things might be spoken of at large, as they are in this method presented to view; but I shall choose to speak of the words,

1. BY WAY OF EXPLICATION.

2. BY WAY OF OBSERVATION.

First. By way of explication: "(All) that the Father giveth me." This word, *all*, is often used in Scripture, and is to be taken more largely, or more strictly, even as the truth or argument, for the sake of which it is made use of, will bear. Wherefore, that we may the better understand the mind of Christ, in the use of it here, we must consider, that it is applicable only to those that shall come to Christ, even to those whom he will in nowise cast out.* Thus also the words all Israel are sometimes to be taken: (though sometimes they are taken for the whole family of Jacob.) "And so all Israel shall be saved." Rom. xi. 26. By all Israel, here he intended, not all of Israel, in the largest sense; For they are not all Israel which are of Israel:

* If *any* do not come to Christ, and avail themselves of this precious promise, it is most clearly their own fault and sin. The offers of pardon and salvation are full and free to all who will accept them.

"Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth,
Is to *feel your need* of Him."

neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children ; but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God ; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8.

This word (all) therefore must in every case be limited or extended as the connexion and argument, for the sake of which it is used, will bear; else we shall abuse Scriptures and readers, and ourselves, and all. “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth,” said Christ, “will draw all men unto me.” John xii. 32. Can any man imagine, that by all, in this place, he should mean all, and every individual man in the world; and not rather that all is consonant to the scope of the place? And if, by being lifted up from the earth, he means, as he should seem, his being taken up into Heaven; and if, by drawing all men unto him, he meant a drawing them into that place of glory; then must he mean by all men, those, and only those, that shall in truth be eternally saved from the wrath to come: For “God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.” Rom. xi. 32. Here again you have all and all, two alls; but yet a great disparity between the all made mention of in the first place, and that all made mention of in the second.

Those intended in this text are the Jews, even all of them, by the first (all) that you find in the words. The second all doth also intend the same people; but yet only so many of them as God will have mercy upon. He hath concluded

them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. The all also in the text is likewise to be limited in its application to the saved, and to them only. But again :

The word giveth, or hath given, must be understood after the same manner as applicable to the same number, all that the Father giveth me ; not all that are given.

If you take the gift of the Father to the Son, in the largest sense ; for in that sense, there are many given to him that shall never come unto him : yea, many are given unto him, that he will cast out. I shall therefore first show you the truth of this, and then in what sense the gift in the text must be taken.

First. That all that are given to Christ, if you take the gift of the Father to him, in the largest sense, cannot be intended in the text, is evident :

1. Because then all the men, yea, all the things in the world, must be saved. "All things," saith he, "are delivered unto me of my Father." Matt. xi. 27. This I think no rational man in the world will conclude. Therefore the gift intended in the text, must be restrained to some, to a gift that is given by way of speciality by the Father to the Son.

2. It must not be taken for all, that, in any sense, are given by the Father to him ; because the Father hath given some, yea many to him, to be dashed in pieces by him. "Ask of me," said the Father to him, "and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

But what must be done with them? Must he save them all? No: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." Psalm ii. 9. This method he uses not with them that he saveth by his grace, but with those that himself and saints shall rule over in justice and severity. Rev. ii. 26, 27. Yet, as you see, they are given to him. Therefore the gift intended in the text must be restrained to some; to a gift that is given by way of speciality by the Father to the Son.

In Psalm xviii. he saith plainly, that some are given to him that he might destroy them: "Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies, that I might destroy them that hate me." ver. 40. These therefore cannot be of the number of those that are said to be given in the text; for those, even all of them, shall come to him, and he will in nowise cast them out.

3. Some are given to Christ, that he by them might bring about some of his high and deep designs in the world. Thus Judas was given to Christ, to wit, that by him, even as he determined before, he might bring about his death, and so the salvation of his elect by his blood. Yea, and Judas must so manage this business, as that he will lose himself for ever in bringing it to pass. Therefore the Lord Jesus, even in his losing Judas, applies himself to the judgment of his Father, if he had not in that thing done that which was right, even in suffering Judas so to bring about his master's death, as that he might by so doing bring about his own eternal damnation also.

“Those,” said he, “that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.” John xvii. 12. Let us then grant that Judas was given to Christ, but not as others are given to him; nor as those made mention of in the text; for then he should have failed to have been so received by Christ, and kept to eternal life. Indeed he was given to Christ, but he was given to him to lose him in the way that I have mentioned before; he was given to Christ, that he might by him bring about his own death, as was before determined; and that in the overthrow of him that did it. Yea, he must bring about his dying for us, in the loss of the instrument that betrayed him, that he might even fulfil the Scripture in his destruction, as well as in the salvation of the rest.—And none of them is lost, but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled.

Those, therefore, intended as the gift in the text, are those that are given by covenant to the Son; those that in other places are called the *elect*, the *chosen*, the *sheep*, and the *children of the promise*, &c.

These be they that the Father hath given to Christ to keep them; those that Christ hath promised eternal life unto; those to whom he hath given his word, and that he will have with him in his kingdom to behold his glory.

“This is the will of the Father that hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And I give unto them eternal life, and

they shall never perish ; neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. My Father that gave them me, is greater than all ; and none is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, and they have kept thy word. I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for those that thou hast given me ; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine ; and I am glorified in them".

"Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me ; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John vi. 39. chap. x. 28. chap. xvii. 2, 6, 9, 10, 24.

All these sentences are of the same import with the text.

So that (as I said before) the word all, as also other words, must not be understood as our foolish fancies or groundless opinions will prompt us to, but do admit of an enlargement or restriction, according to the true meaning and intent of the text.

All that the *Father* giveth.

By this word, *Father*, Christ describeth the person giving ; by which we may learn several useful things :

1. That the Lord God, and the Father of

our Lord Jesus Christ, is concerned with the Son in the salvation of his people. True, His acts, as to our salvation, are diverse from that of the Son ; he was not capable of doing that, or those things for us, as did the Son ; he died not, he spilt not his blood for our redemption as the Son ; but yet he hath a great hand in our salvation too. As Christ saith, “ the Father himself loveth you, and his love is manifest in choosing of us, in giving of us to his Son ; yea, and in giving his Son also to be a ransom for us.” Hence he is called, the Father of Mercies, and the God of all comfort. For here even the Father hath himself found out and made way for his grace to come to us through the sides, and the heart’s blood of his well-beloved Son. Col. i. 12. The Father therefore is to be remembered and adored as one having a chief concern in the salvation of sinners. We ought to give thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light ; for the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. 1 John iv. 14. Col. i. 12.

2. Christ Jesus by this Father would familiarize this giver to us. Naturally the name of God is dreadful to us, especially when he is discovered to us by those names that declare his justice, holiness, power, and glory ; but now this word Father is a familiar word, it alarms not the sinner, but rather inclines his heart to love, and to be pleased with the remembrance of him. Hence Christ also, when he would have us to pray with godly boldness, puts this word Father into our mouths, saying, “ Our Father,

which art in heaven ;” concluding thereby, that by the familiarity that by such a word is intimated, the children of God may take more boldness to pray for, and ask great things. I myself have often found, that when I can say but this word Father, it doth me more good, than when I call him by any other Scripture name. It is worth your noting, that to call God by his relative title, was rare among the saints in Old Testament times ; seldom do you find him called by this name ; sometimes not in three or four books ; but now, in New Testament times, he is called by no name so often as this, both by the Lord Jesus himself, and by the apostles afterwards.

All that the Father *giveth*.

This word, *giveth*, is out of Christ’s ordinary dialect, and seemeth to intimate, at the first sound, as if the Father’s gift to the Son, was not an act that is past, but one that is present, and continuing ; when indeed the gift was bestowed upon Christ, when the eternal covenant was made between them, before all worlds. Wherefore in those other places, when this gift is mentioned, it is still spoken of as an act that is past : As “all that he hath given me ; to as many as thou hast given me : thou gavest them me, and these which thou hast given me.” Therefore, of necessity, this must be the first and chief sense of the text.

But again, this word, *giveth*, is not to be rejected ; for it hath its proper life, and may signify to us,

First. That though the act of giving among men doth admit of the time past, or the time to come, and is to be spoken of with reference to such time, yet with God it is not so. Things past, or things to come, are always present with God, and with his Son Jesus Christ. He calleth things that are not (that is to us) as though they were. And again, "known unto God are all his works from the foundation of the world." All things to God are present, and so the gift of the Father to the Son, although to us, as is manifested by the word, it is an act that is past. Rom. iv. 17. Acts xv. 10.

Secondly. Christ may express himself thus, to show, that the Father hath not only given him this portion before the world was; but that he will bring them to him at the time of their conversion; for the Father bringeth them to Christ. John vi. 65.

As it is said, "she shall be brought unto the king in raiment of needle-work;" that is, in the righteousness of Christ; for it is God that imputeth that to those that are saved. Psal. xlv. 14. 1 Cor. i. 30.

A man giveth his daughter to such a man, first in order to marriage, and this respects the time past, and giveth her again at the day appointed, in marriage: and in this last sense, perhaps the text may have a meaning; that is, that all that the Father hath (before the world was) given to Jesus Christ, he giveth them again to him, in the day of their espousals.

'Things that are given among men, are often best at first, when they are new; and the rea-

son is, because all earthly things wax old ; but with Christ it is not so : this gift of the Father is not old and deformed, and unpleasant in his eyes ; and therefore to him it is always new. When the Lord spake of giving the land of Canaan to the Israelites, he saith not, that he had given, or would give it to them : but thus “ the Lord thy God giveth thee this good land.” Deut. ix. 6. Not but that he had given it to them, while they were in the loins of their fathers, hundreds of years before. Yet he saith now, he giveth it to them ; as if they were now also in the very act of taking possession, when as yet they were on the other side Jordan. What then should be the meaning ? Why, I take it to be this : that the land should be to them always as new ; as new as if they were taking possession thereof but now ; and so is the gift of the Father, mentioned in the text, to the Son ; it is always new, as if it were always new.

All that the Father giveth *me*.

In these words you find mention made of two persons, the Father, and the Son ; the Father giving, and the Son receiving, or accepting of this gift. This then, in the first place, clearly demonstrates, that the Father and the Son, though they, with the Holy Ghost, are one and the eternal God ; yet as to their personality, are distinct. The Father is one, the Son is one, the Holy Ghost is one. But because there is in this text mention made but of two of the three, therefore a word about these two. The giver and receiver cannot be the same person in a

proper sense, in the same act of giving and receiving. He that giveth, giveth not to himself, but to another ; the Father giveth not to the Father, to wit, to himself ; but to the Son : the Son receiveth not of the Son, to wit, of himself ; but of the Father : so when the Father giveth commandment, he giveth it not to himself, but to another ; as Christ saith, “ he hath given me commandment,” John xii. 49. So again, “ I am one that beareth witness of myself, and the Father that sent me, beareth witness of me.” John viii. 18.

Further, there is something implied that is not expressed, to wit, that the Father hath not given all men to Christ : that is, in that sense as is intended in the text, though in a larger, as was before, he hath given him every one of them ; for then all should be saved : he hath therefore disposed of some another way. He gives some to idolatry ; he gives some up to uncleanness, to vile affections, and to a reprobate mind. Now these he disposeth of in his anger, for their destruction, Acts vii. 42. Rom. i. 24, 26, 28 ; “ that they may reap the fruit of their doings, and be filled with the reward of their own ways.” But neither hath he thus disposed of all men ; he hath even of mercy reserved some from these judgments, and those are they that he will pardon, as he saith, “ For I will pardon them whom I reserve,” Jer. i. 20. Now these he hath given to Jesus Christ by will, as a legacy and portion. Hence the Lord Jesus says, “ This is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should

lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." John vi. 39.

The Father, therefore, in giving of them to him to save them, must needs declare unto us these following things:

1. That he is able to answer this design of God; to wit, to save them to the uttermost sin, the uttermost temptation, &c. Heb. vii. 25. Hence he is said to lay help on one that is mighty to save. And hence it is again, that God did, even of old, promise to send his people a Saviour, a great one, Psal. lxxxix. 19. Isa. lxiii. 1. To save us is a great work, and calls for omnipotence in the undertaker: hence he is called the Mighty God, the Wonderful Counsellor, &c. Sin is strong, Satan is also strong, death and the grave are strong, and so is the curse of the law; therefore it follows, that this Jesus must needs be by God the Father accounted Almighty, in that he hath given his elect to him to save them, and deliver them from these, and that in despite of all their force and power.

2. The Father's giving of them to him to save them, declares unto us, that he is, and will be faithful in his office of Mediator, and that therefore they shall be secured from the fruit and wages of their sins, which is eternal damnation, by his faithful execution of it.—And indeed it is said, even by the Holy Ghost himself, that he is faithful to him that appointed him; that is, to this work of saving those that the Father hath given him for that purpose; as Moses was faithful in all his house; yea, and more faithful too, for Moses was faithful in God's house, but as a

servant; but Christ as a Son, over his own house. Heb. iii. 5, 6.

And therefore this man is counted worthy of more glory than Moses, even upon this account, because more faithful than he, as well as because of the dignity of his person. Therefore in him, and in his truth and faithfulness, God rested well pleased, and hath put all the government of his people upon his shoulders, knowing, that nothing shall be wanting in him, that may any way perfect this design. And of this, he, to wit, the Son, hath already given a proof; for when the time was come, that his blood was, by divine justice, required for their redemption, washing and cleansing, he as freely poured it out from his heart; not hesitating to part with his own life, that the life which was laid up for his people in heaven, might not fail to be bestowed upon them. And upon this account (as well as upon any other) it is, that God calleth him his righteous servant, Isa. liii. 11, for his righteousness could never have been complete, if he had not been to the uttermost faithful to the work he undertook. It is also because he is faithful and true, that in righteousness he doth judge and make work for his people's deliverance, he will faithfully perform this trust reposed in him. The Father knows this, and hath therefore given his elect unto him.

Thirdly. The Father's giving of them to him to save them, declares that he is, and will be gentle and patient towards them, under all their provocations and misdoings. It is not to be imagined the trials and provocations that

the Son of God hath all along had with these people, that have been given to him that saves them. Indeed he is said to be a tried stone; for he has been tried, not only by the devil, the guilt of sin, death, and the curse of the law, but also by the ignorance, unruliness, sin, and errors of his people both in life and doctrine. Were we but capable of seeing how the Lord Jesus has been tried, even by his people, ever since there was one in the world, we should be amazed at his patience, and gentle forbearance towards them. It is said, indeed, "the Lord is very pitiful, slow to anger, and of great mercy:" and indeed, if he had not been so, he could never have borne with men as he has done from Adam hitherto. Therefore is his pity and bowels towards his church, preferred above the pity and bowels of a mother towards her child. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee, saith the Lord." Isa. xlix. 15.

God did once give Moses, as Christ's servant, a handful of his people, to carry them in his bosom, but no farther than from Egypt to Canaan; and this Moses, as it is said of him by the Holy Ghost, was the meekest man that was then to be found on the earth: yea, and he loved the people devotedly, yet neither would his meekness nor love hold out in this work; he failed and grew passionate, even to provoking his God to anger under this work. And Moses said unto the Lord, "Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant?" But what was the afflic-

tion? Why the Lord said unto him, "Carry this people in thy bosom, as a nursing father beareth the sucking child, unto the land that he swore unto their fathers." And how then? "Not I," says Moses, "I am not able to bear all this people, because it is too heavy for me: if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, and let me not see my wretchedness." Numb. xi. 11-14. God gave Moses, to carry them in his bosom, that he might show gentleness and patience towards them, under all the provocations wherewith they would provoke him from that time, till he had brought them to their land; but he failed in the work; he could not exercise it, because he had not sufficiency of patience towards them: but now it is said of the person speaking in the text, that "he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with^e young," Isa. xl. 11, intimating, that this was one of the qualifications that God looked for, and knew was in him, when he gave his elect to him to save them.

Fourthly. The Father giving of him to save them, declares, that he hath a sufficiency of wisdom to wage with all those difficulties that would attend him in his bringing of his sons and daughters unto glory. He hath made him to us to be wisdom; yea he is called wisdom itself. 1 Cor. i. 30. And God saith, moreover, "that he shall deal prudently." Isa. lii. 13. And indeed, he that shall take upon him to be the Saviour of the people, had need be wise, because their adversaries are subtle above any. Here they are to

encounter with the serpent, who, by his subtlety, outwitted our father and mother, when their wisdom was at the highest. Gen. iii. But if we talk of wisdom, our Jesus is wise, wiser than Solomon, wiser than all men, wiser than all angels; he is even the wisdom of God; "Christ the wisdom of God;" and hence it is, that he turneth sins, temptations, persecutions, falls, and all things, for good unto his people. Rom. viii. 29.

Herein indeed perceive we the love of God. Hiram gathered, that God loved Israel, because he had given them such a king as Solomon. 2 Chron. ii. 11. But how much more may we behold the love that God bestowed upon us, in that he hath given us to his Son, and also given his Son for us.

All that the Father giveth me *shall come*.

In these last words, there is closely inserted an answer unto the Father's end in giving of his elect to Jesus Christ. The Father's end was, that they might come to him, and be saved by him; and that, says the Son, shall be done. "Neither sin nor satan, neither flesh nor world, neither wisdom nor folly, shall hinder their coming to me. They shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

Here therefore the Lord Jesus positively determineth, to put forth such a sufficiency of all grace, as shall effectually perform this promise. They shall come: that is, he will cause them to come, by infusing of an effectual blessing into all the means that shall be used to that end. As was said to the evil spirit, that was sent to persuade Ahab to go and fall at Ramoth-Gilead;

“Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also; go forth, and do so;” 1 Kings xxii. 22; so will Jesus Christ say, to the means that shall be used for the bringing of those to him that the Father hath given him. I say he will bless it effectually to this very end; it shall persuade them, and prevail also; else, as I said, the Father’s end would be frustrated: for the Father’s will is, that, of all that he hath given him, he should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day; in order next unto himself, “Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” 1 Cor. xv. 23. But this cannot be done, if there should fail to be a work of grace effectually wrought, though but in any one of them. But this shall not fail to be wrought in them, even in all the Father hath given him to save. “All that the Father hath given me shall come unto me,” &c. But to speak more distinctly of the words, *they shall come*; two things I should show you from these words.

First. *What it is to come to Christ.*

Secondly. *What influence there is in this promise, to make them come to him.*

First. I would show you what it is to come to Christ. This word come, must be understood spiritually, not carnally; for many came to him carnally, or bodily, that have no saving advantage by him: multitudes did thus come unto him in the days of his flesh, yea, innumerable companies. There is also at this day a formal customary coming to his ordinances, and ways of worship, which availeth not any thing; but with them I shall not now meddle; for they

are not intended in the text. The coming then intended in the text, is to be understood of the coming of the mind to him, even the moving of the heart towards him. I say, the moving of the heart towards him, from a deep sense of the absolute want that a man hath of him for his justification and salvation.

This description of coming to Christ, divideth itself into two heads.

First. *That coming to Christ is a moving of the mind towards him.*

Secondly. *That it is a moving of the mind towards him, from a deep sense of the absolute want that a man hath of him for his justification and salvation.*

To speak of the first, *that it is a moving of the mind towards him.* This is evident, because coming hither or thither, if it be voluntary, is by an act of the mind or will ; so coming to Christ, is through the inclining of the will. "Thy people shall be willing." Psalm cx. 3. This willingness of heart is it which sets the mind a moving after, or towards him. The church expresseth this moving of her mind towards Christ, by the moving of her bowels. "My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door, and my bowels were moved for him." Cant. v. 4. My bowels, the passions of my mind and affections ; which passions of the affections are expressed by the yearning and sounding of the bowels, the yearning or passionate working of them, the sounding of them or their making a noise for him. Gen. xliii. 30 ; 1 Kings iii. 26 ; Isa. xvi. 11.

This then is the coming to Christ, even a moving towards him with the mind. "And it shall come to pass, that every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live." Ezek. xlvii. 9.

The water in this text, is the grace of God in the doctrine of it; the living things are the children of men, to whom the grace of God, by the Gospel, is preached. Now, saith he, "every living thing which moveth, whithersoever the rivers shall come, shall live." And see how this word moveth is expounded by Christ himself in the book of the Revelations: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, that is, willing, let him take the water of life freely. Rev. xxii. 17.

So that to move in thy mind and will after Christ, is to be coming to him. There are many poor souls that are coming to Christ, that yet cannot tell how to believe it, because they think that coming to him is some strange and wonderful thing; and indeed so it is. But I mean, they overlook the inclination of their will, the moving of their mind, and the sounding of their bowels after him; and count these none of this strange and wonderful thing; when indeed it is a work of greatest wonder in this world, to see a man who was dead in sin, under the dominion of the devil, an enemy to Christ, and to all things spiritually good: I say, to see this man moving with his mind after the Lord Jesus Christ, is one of the highest wonders in the world.

Secondly. It is a moving of the mind towards

him, from a deep sense of the absolute want that a man hath of him for his justification and salvation. Indeed, without this sense of a lost condition without him, there will be no moving of the mind towards him: a moving of the mouth there may be; "with their mouth they show much love." Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Such a people as this will come as the true people cometh; that is, in show and outward appearance; and they will sit before God's ministers, as his people sit before them; and they will hear his words too, but they will not do them: that is, will not come inwardly with their minds; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart (or mind) goeth after the world. Now all this is because they want an effectual sense of the misery of their state by nature; for not till they have that, will they with full purpose of heart move oftener to him. Therefore thus it is said concerning the true comers: "In that day the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come that were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the Lord in the holy mount at Jerusalem." Isa. xxvii. 13. They are, then, as you see, the outcasts, or those that are ready to perish, that indeed have their minds effectually moved to come to Jesus Christ. This sense of things was that which made the three thousand come, that made Saul come, that made the gaoler come; and that indeed makes all others come, that come effectually. Acts. ii. 41; xvi. 30.

The case of the three lepers, of whom you read, 2 Kings vii. 3, illustrates the true coming

to Christ. The famine in those days was sore in the land; there was no bread for the people; and as for what sustenance there was, viz. asses' flesh, and dove's dung, that was only in Samaria; and of these the lepers had no share, for they were thrust without the city. Well, now they sat in the gate of the city, and hunger was, as I may say, making his last meal of them; and being therefore half dead already, what do they think of doing? Why, first they display the dismal colors of death before each other's faces, and then resolve what to do, saying, "If we say we will go into the city, then the famine is in the city, and we shall die there; if we sit still here, we die also; now therefore come, let us fall into the host of the Syrians; if they save us alive we shall live; if they kill us we shall but die." Here now was necessity at work, and this necessity drove them to go thither for life, whither else they would never have gone for it. Thus it is with them that in truth come to Jesus Christ: death is before them, they see it, and feel it, and therefore they come, even of necessity; being forced thereto by that sense they have of their being utterly and everlastingly undone, if they find not safety in him.

These are they that will come; indeed these are they that are invited to come. "Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28.

Take two or three things to make this more plain; to wit, that coming to Christ, floweth

from a deep sense of the absolute need that a man hath of him, as I said before.

First. "They shall come with weeping, and with supplication will I lead them; I will cause them to walk by the rivers of waters in a straight way, wherein they shall not stumble." Jer. xxxi. 9. Mind it! they come with weeping and supplication; they come with prayers and tears. Now prayers and tears are the effects of a right sense of the need of mercy. Thus a senseless sinner cannot come, he cannot pray, he cannot weep, he cannot come sensible of what he sees not, nor feels. "In those days, and in that time, the children of Israel shall come; they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping: they shall go, and seek the Lord their God; they shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Jer. l. 4, 5.

Secondly. This coming to Christ, is called a running to him; a flying to him; "a flying to him from the wrath to come." By all which terms, is set forth the feeling of the man that comes; to wit, that he is affected with the sense of his sin, and the death due thereto; that he is sensible that the avenger of blood pursues him, and that therefore he is cut off, if he makes not speed to the Son of God for life. Matt. iii. 7. Psal. cxliii. 9. Flying is the last work of a man in danger; all that are in danger do not fly; no, not all that see themselves in danger; flying is the last work of danger; all that hear of danger

will not fly. Men will consider if there be no other way of escape before they fly. Therefore, as I said, flying is the last thing. When all refuge fails, and a man is made to see that there is nothing left him but sin, death, and damnation, unless he flies to Christ for life; then he flies, and not till then.

Thirdly. That the true coming is from a sense of an absolute need of Jesus Christ to save, &c, is evident by the outcry that is made by them that come, even as they are coming to him, Matt. xiv. 30; Acts ii. 37; xvi. 30, "Lord, save me, or I perish;" "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" and the like. This language doth sufficiently discover that the truly coming souls, are souls sensible of their need of salvation by Jesus Christ; and, moreover, that there is nothing can help them but Christ.

Fourthly. It is yet farther evident by these few things that follow:—It is said that such are pricked in their hearts, that is, with the sentence of death by the law; and the least prick in the heart kills a man. Acts ii. 37. Such are said, as I observed before, to weep, to tremble, and to be astonished in themselves, at the evident and unavoidable danger that attends them, unless they fly to Jesus Christ.

Fifthly. Coming to Christ is attended with an honest and sincere forsaking of all for him. "If any man come unto me, and hate not his father and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth

not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple." Luke xiv. 26, 27.

By these, and the like expressions elsewhere, Christ describeth the true comer, or the man that indeed is coming to him; he is one that casteth all behind his back; he leaveth all, he forsaketh all, he hateth all things that would stand in his way to hinder his coming to Jesus Christ. There are a great many pretended comers to Jesus Christ in the world. And they are much like the man that you read of in Matt. xxi. 30, that said to his father's bidding, "I go, sir; and went not." I say, there are a great many such comers to Jesus Christ: they say, when Christ calls by his gospel, "I come, sir," but still they abide by their carnal delights. They come not at all, only they give him a courtly compliment; but he takes notice of it, and will not let it pass for any more than a lie. He said, "I go, sir," and went not: he dissembled and lied. Take heed of this, you that flatter yourselves with your own deceivings; words will not do with Jesus Christ: coming is coming, and nothing else will go for coming with him.

Before I speak on the other head, I shall answer some objections that usually lie in the way of those that in truth are coming to Jesus Christ.

Objection 1. Though I cannot deny but my mind runs after Christ, and that too as being moved thereto from a sight and consideration of my lost condition, (for I see without him I perish,) yet I fear my motives are not right in coming to him.

Quest. Why, what is thy motive in coming to Christ?

Ans. My motive is, that I might have life, and be saved by Jesus Christ.

This is the objection. Well, let me tell thee, that to come to Christ for life, and to be saved, although at present thou hast no other object, is a good coming to Jesus Christ. This is evident, because Christ propoundeth life, as the only argument to prevail with sinners to come to him, and so also blameth them because they come not to him for life: "And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life." John v. 40. Besides, there are many other Scriptures whereby he allureth sinners to come to him, in which he propoundeth nothing to them but their safety: as, "He that believeth in him shall not perish. He that believeth is passed from death to life. He that believeth shall be saved. He that believeth on him is not condemned." And believing and coming are all one. So that you see, to come to Christ for life, is a lawful coming, and good.

First. He honoreth the word of Christ, and consenteth to the truth of it.

Secondly. He honoreth Christ's person, in that he believeth that there is life in him, and that he is able to save him from death, hell, the devil, and damnation: for unless a man believes this, he will not come to Christ for life.

Thirdly. He honoreth him, in that he believeth he is authorized of the Father to give to those that come to him for it. John xvii. 1, 2, 3.

Fourthly. Farther, he that cometh to Jesus

Christ for life taketh part with him against sin, and against the tattered and imperfect righteousness of the world ; yea, and against false Christs, and damnable errors that set themselves against the worthiness of his merits and sufficiency : this is evident, for that such a soul sing-leth Christ out from them all, as the only one that can save.

Fifthly. Therefore, as Noah, at God's command, "prepared an ark for the saving of his house, by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith," Heb. xi. 7 : wherefore, coming sinner, be content : he that cometh to Jesus Christ, believeth too that he is willing to show mercy, and to have compassion upon him (though unworthy) that comes to him for life. And therefore thy soul lieth not only under a special invitation to come, but under a promise, too, of being accepted and forgiven. Matt. xi. 28.

All these particular parts and qualities of faith, are in that soul that comes to Jesus Christ for life, as is evident to any indifferent judgment.

For, will he that believeth not the testimony of Christ concerning the baseness of sin, and the insufficiency of the righteousness of the world, come to Christ for life ? No.

He that believeth not the testimony of the word, comes not : he that believeth that there is life any where else, comes not : he that questions whether the Father has given Christ power to forgive, comes not : he that thinketh that there is more in sin, in the law, in death, and the devil,

to destroy, than there is in Christ, to save, comes not: he also that questions his faithful management of his priesthood for the salvation of sinners, comes not.

Thou then that art indeed the coming sinner, believest all this; true, perhaps, thou dost not believe with that full assurance, nor hast thou leisure to take notice of thy faith, as to those distinct acts of it; but yet all this faith is in him coming to Christ for life. And the faith that thus worketh, is the faith of the best and purest kind; because this man comes alone as a sinner, and as seeing that life is to be had only in Jesus Christ.

Before I conclude my answer to this objection, take into thy consideration these two things:

First. That the cities of refuge were erected for those that were dead in the law, and that yet would live by grace, even for those that were to fly thither for life from the avenger of blood that pursued after them. And it is worth your noting, that those that were upon their flight thither, are in a peculiar manner called the people of God: "Cast ye up, cast ye up," saith God, "prepare the way: take up the stumbling-block out of the way of my people." Isa. lvii. 14. This is meant, of preparing the way to the city of refuge, that the slayers might escape thither; which flying slayers are here, by way of speciality, called the people of God; even those of them that esaped thither for life.

Secondly. Consider the case of Ahab, when Benhadad sent to him for life, saying, "Thy servant Benhadad saith, I pray thee let me live."

Though Benhadad had sought the crown, kingdom, yea, and life also of Ahab, yet how effectually doth Benhadad prevail with him! "Is Benhadad yet alive?" said Ahab; "He is my brother: go ye, bring him to me. So he made him ride in his chariot." 1 Kings xx. 32, 33.

Coming sinner, what thinkest thou? If Jesus Christ had as little goodness in him as Ahab, he might grant a humble Benhadad life; thou neither beggest of him his crown nor dignity: life, eternal life will serve thy turn. How much more then shalt thou have it, since thou hast to deal with him who is goodness and mercy itself! Yea, since thou art also called upon, yea, greatly encouraged by a promise of life, to come unto him for life. Read also these Scriptures. Num. xxxv. 10-12; Josh. xx. 1-5; Heb. vi. 17-20.

Object. 2. When I say, I only seek my own object, I mean, I do not find that I design God's glory in my own salvation by Christ; and that makes me fear that I am selfish and do not come aright.

Ans. Where doth Christ Jesus require such a qualification of those that are coming to him for life? Come thou for life, and trouble not thy head with such objections against thyself, and let God and Christ alone to glorify themselves in the salvation of such a worm as thou art. The Father saith to the Son, Thou art my Son, in whom I will be glorified. God promiseth life to sinners, as the argument to prevail with them to come to him for life; and Christ says plainly, "I am come, that they might have life." John

x. 10. He hath no need of thy designs : thou hast need of his eternal life. Pardon of sin, and deliverance from wrath to come, Christ offers to thee, and these be the things that thou hast need of ; besides, God will be gracious and merciful to worthless, undeserving wretches. Come, then, as such a one, and lay no stumbling-blocks in the way to him, but come to him for life, and live. John v. 24 ; x. 10 ; iii. 36 ; Matt. i. 21 ; John xi. 25, 26.

When the jailer said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul did not so much as once ask him, What is your motive in this question? Do you design the glory of God in the salvation of your soul? He had more wisdom. He knew that such questions as these would have been but fool's baubles, instead of a sufficient answer to so weighty a question as this. Wherefore, since this poor wretch lacked salvation by Jesus Christ, I mean, to be saved from hell and death, which he knew (now) was due to him for the sins he had committed ; Paul bids him, like a poor condemned sinner as he was, to proceed still in this his way of self-seeking, saying, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," Acts xvi. 32. I know that afterwards thou wilt desire to glorify Christ, by walking in the way of his precepts ; but at present thou wantest life ; the avenger of blood is behind thee, and the devil, like a roaring lion, is behind thee. Come, now, and obtain life from these ; and when thou hast obtained some comfortable persuasion that thou art made partaker of life by Christ, then, and not till then, thou wilt say,

“Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies.” Ps. ciii. 1-4.

Object. 3. But I cannot believe that I come to Christ aright, because sometimes I almost doubt his very being and office to save.

Thus to do is horrible; but mayest thou not judge amiss in this matter?

How can I judge amiss, when I judge as I feel? Thou mayest judge amiss for all that. Why, saith the sinner, I think that these doubts are from my heart.

Ans. Let me answer:—That which comes from thy heart, comes from thy will and affections, from thy understanding, judgment, and conscience; for those must acquiesce in thy doubts, if thy doubts be with thy heart. And how sayest thou? Dost thou with thy affection and conscience thus doubt?

Ans. No, my conscience trembles when such thoughts come into my mind; and my affections are otherwise inclined.

Then I conclude, that these things are either suddenly injected by the devil, or else are the fruits of that body of sin and death that yet dwells within thee, or perhaps from both together.

If they come wholly from the devil, as they seem, because thy conscience and affections are against them; or if they come from the body of death that is in thee; (and be not thou curious in

inquiring from which of them they come, the safest way is, to lay enough at thy own door ;) nothing of this should hinder thy coming, nor make thee conclude thou comest not aright.

And before I leave thee, let me make a little inquiry with thee about this matter.

First. Dost thou like these wicked blasphemies.

Ans. No, no ; their presence and working kills me.

Secondly. Dost thou mourn for them, pray against them, and hate thyself because of them ?

Ans. Yes, yes ; but that which afflicts me, is, I do not prevail against them.

Thirdly. Dost thou sincerely choose (if thou couldst have thy choice) that thy heart might be affected, and engaged in the things that are best, most heavenly and holy ?

Ans. With all my heart, and death the next hour, (if it were God's will,) rather than thus to sin against him.

Well, then, thy not liking of them, thy mourning for them, thy praying against them, and thy loathing thyself because of them, with thy sincere choosing of those thoughts for thy delight, which are heavenly and holy, clearly declares, that these things are not countenanced either by thy will, affections, understanding, judgment, or conscience ; and so, that thy heart is not in them, but that rather they come immediately from the devil, or arise from the body of death that is in thy flesh ; of which thou oughtest to say, " Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." Rom. vii. 17.

Object. 4. But, saith another, “ I am so heartless, so slow, and, as I think, so indifferent in my coming, that, to speak truth, I know not whether my kind of coming ought to be called a coming to Christ.

Ans. You know that I told you at first, that coming to Christ is a moving of the heart and affections towards him.

But saith the soul, my dullness and indifference in all holy duties, demonstrate my heartlessness in coming; and to come, and not with the heart, signifies nothing at all.

Ans. The moving of thy heart after Christ is not to be discerned, at all times, by the sensible, affectionate performance of duties; but rather by those secret groanings and complaints, which thy soul makes to God against that sloth that attends thee in duties.

Secondly. But grant it to be even as thou sayest it is, that thou comest so slowly, &c; yet, since Christ bids them come that come not at all, surely they may be accepted that do come, though attended with those infirmities, which thou at present groanest under. He saith, “and him that cometh:” he saith not, if they come in this way or that way; but “him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out.” He saith also in the ninth of Proverbs, “As for him that wanteth understanding,” that is, a heart, for oftentimes the understanding is taking for the heart, “Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.”

Thirdly. Thou mayest be vehement in thy spirit in coming to Jesus Christ, and yet be

plagued with sensible sloth. So was the church, when she cried, "Draw me, we will run after thee;" and Paul, when he said, "When I would do good, evil is present with me," Cant. 1. 4; Rom. vii. 21. The works, strugglings, and oppositions of the flesh, are more manifest than are the works of the Spirit in our hearts, and so are sooner felt than they. What then? Let us not be discouraged at the sight and feeling of our own infirmities, but run the faster to Jesus Christ for salvation.

Fourthly. Get thy heart warmed with the sweet promise of Christ's acceptance of the coming of sinners, and that will make thee make more haste unto him. Discouraging thoughts are like cold weather, they benumb the senses, and make us go clumsily about our business; but the sweet and warm gleams of promise, are like the comfortable beams of the sun, which enliveneth and refresheth. You see how little the bee and the fly doth play in the winter; why, the cold hinders them from doing it; but when the wind and sun is warm, who so busy as they?

Fifthly. But again, he that comes to Christ, flies for life; now there is no man that flies for his life, that thinks he speeds fast enough on his journey: no, could he, he would willingly take a mile at a step. Oh my slothful and heartless soul! sayest thou: "Oh that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away, and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest." Ps. lv. 6, 8.

Poor coming soul, thou art like the man that

would ride full gallop, whose horse will hardly trot; now the desire of his mind is not to be judged by the slow pace of the dull jade he rides, but by the hitching, and kicking, and spurring, as he sits on his back. Thy flesh is like this dull jade, it will not gallop after Christ; it will be backward, though thy soul and heaven lie at stake. But be of good comfort, Christ judgeth not according to the fierceness of outward motion, Mark x. 17, but according to the sincerity of the heart and inward parts. John i. 47; Ps. li. 6; Matt. xxvi. 41.

Sixthly. Ziba, in appearance, came to David much faster than did Mephibosheth; but his heart was not so upright in him to David, as was his. It is true, Mephibosheth had a check from David: for, said he, "wherefore wentest thou not with me, Mephibosheth?" But when David came to remember Mephibosheth was lame, for his plea was, "thy servant is lame," 2 Sam. xix. 26, he concluded he would have come after him faster than he did. And Mephibosheth appealed to David, who was in those days as an angel of God, to know all things that are done in the earth, if he did not believe that the reason of his backwardness lay in his lameness, and not in his mind. Why, poor coming sinner, thou canst not come to Christ with that outward swiftness of career, as many others do; but doth the reason of thy backwardness lie in thy mind and will, or in the flesh? Canst thou say sincerely, "the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak?" Matt. xxvi. 41. Yea, canst thou appeal to the Lord Jesus, who knowest

perfectly the very inmost thought of thy heart, that this is true? Then take this for thy comfort: he hath said, "I will assemble her that halteth," "I will make her that halted a remnant, and her that was cast far off a strong nation." Micah iv. 6, 7. What canst thou have more from the lips of the Son of God? But,

Seventhly. I read of some that are to follow Christ in chains; I say, to come after him in chains. "Thus saith the Lord, The labor of Egypt, and merchandise of Ethiopia and of the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over unto thee, and they shall be thine: they shall come after thee; in chains they shall come over, and they shall fall down unto thee, they shall make supplication unto thee, saying, Surely God is in thee, and there is none else." Isa. xlv. 14. Surely they that come after Christ in chains, come to him in great difficulty, because their steps by their chains are strained.

And what chains so heavy, as those that discourage thee? "Thy chain, which is made up of guilt and filth, is heavy; it is a wretched bond about thy neck, by which thy strength doth fail." Lam. i. 14; v. 17. But come, though thou comest in chains. It is glory to Christ, that a sinner comes after him in chains. The clanking of thy chains, though troublesome to thee, is not, nor can be, any obstruction to thy salvation; it is Christ's work and glory to save thee from thy chains, to enlarge thy steps and set thee at liberty. The blind man, though called, surely could not come rapidly to Jesus Christ; but Christ could stand still, and stay for him.

True, he rideth “upon the wings of the wind ;” but yet he is long-suffering, and his long-suffering is salvation to him that cometh to him. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

Eighthly. Hadst thou seen those that came to the Lord Jesus in the days of his flesh, how slowly they came to him, by reason of their infirmities ; and also, how friendly, and graciously he received them, and gave them the desire of their hearts, thou wouldst not, as thou dost, make such objections against thyself in coming to Jesus Christ.

Object. 5. But, says another, I fear I come too late ; I doubt I have staid too long ; I am afraid the door is shut.

Ans. Thou canst never come too late to Jesus Christ, if thou dost come. This is manifest by two instances.

First. By the man that came to him at the eleventh hour. This man was idle all the day long ; he had a whole gospel day to come in, and he played it all away, save only the last hour thereof ; but at last, at the eleventh hour, he came, and goes into the vineyard to work along with the rest of the laborers, that had borne the burden and heat of the day. Well, but how was he received by the Lord of the vineyard ? Why, when pay-day came, he had even as much as the rest ; yea, had his money first. True, the others murmured at him, but what did the Lord Jesus answer them ? “ Is thine eye evil because I am good ? I will give unto this last even as unto thee.” Matt. xx. 14, 15.

Secondly. The other instance is, the thief

upon the cross ; he came late also, even at an hour before his death ; yea, he stayed from Jesus Christ as long as he had liberty to be a thief, and longer too ; for could he have deluded the judge, and by his lying words escaped his just condemnation, for aught I know, he had not come as yet to his Saviour ; but being convicted and condemned to die ; yea, fastened to the cross ; behold the Lord Jesus, when this wicked one, even now, desireth mercy at his hands, tells him, and that without the least reflection upon him, for his former misspent life, “ To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” Luke xxiii. 43.

Object. But is not the door of mercy shut against some before they die ?

Ans. Yes, and God forbids that prayer should be made to him for them. Jer. vii. 16 ; Jude ver. 4.

Quest. Then, why may not I doubt that I may be one of these ?

Ans. By no means, if thou art coming to Jesus Christ ; because when God shuts the door upon men, he gives them no heart to come to Jesus Christ. None come but those to whom it is given of the Father ; but thou comest, therefore it is given to thee of the Father.

Be sure, therefore, if the Father hath given thee a heart to come to Jesus Christ, the gate of mercy yet stands open to thee : “ For it stands not with the wisdom of God to give strength to come to the birth, and yet to shut up the womb ;” Isa. lxvi. 9 ; to give grace to come to Jesus Christ, and yet to shut up the door of his mercy upon thee. “ Incline your ear,” saith he, “ and

come unto me : hear, and your souls shall live ; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David." Isa. lv. 3.

Object. But it is said, that some knocked when the door was shut.

Ans. Yes ; but the texts in which these knockers are mentioned, are to be referred unto the day of judgment, and not to the coming of the sinner to Christ in this life. See the texts, Matt. xxv. 11 ; Luke xiii. 24, 25.

These, therefore, concern thee nothing at all, that art coming to Jesus Christ ; thou art coming now : "Now is the accepted time ; behold, now is the day of salvation." 2 Cor. vi. 2. Now God is upon the mercy-seat ; now Christ Jesus sits by, continually pleading the victory of his blood for sinners ; and now, even as long as this world lasts, this word of the text shall be free, and fully fulfilled, "And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

The greater sinner thou art, the greater need of mercy thou hast, and the more will Christ be glorified thereby. Come, then, come and try ; "Come, taste and see how good the Lord is to an undeserving sinner."

Object. 6. But, says another, I am fallen since I began to come to Christ ; therefore I fear I did not come aright, and so, consequently, that Christ will not receive me.

Ans. Falls are dangerous, for they dishonor Christ, wound the conscience, and cause the enemies of God to speak reproachfully. But it is no good argument, I am fallen, therefore I was not coming aright to Jesus Christ. If David,

and Solomon, and Peter, had thus objected against themselves, they had added to their griefs, and with, at least, as much cause as thou. A man whose steps are ordered by the Lord, and whose goings the Lord delights in, may yet be overtaken in a temptation that may cause him to fall. Ps. xxxvii. 23, 24. Did not Aaron fall? yea, and Moses himself? What shall we say of Hezekiah and Jehosaphat? There are therefore falls and falls; falls pardonable, and falls unpardonable. Falls unpardonable are falls against light, from the faith, to the despising of, and trampling upon, Jesus Christ and his blessed undertakings, Heb. vi. 5-7; x. 28, 29. Now, as for such, there remains no more sacrifice for sin: indeed they have no heart, no mind, no desire to come to Jesus Christ for life; there they must perish: nay, says the Holy Ghost, it is impossible that they should be renewed again to repentance. Therefore these God hath no compassion for, neither ought we; but for other falls, though they be dreadful, and God will chastize his people for them, they do not prove thee a graceless man, one not come to Jesus Christ for life.

It is said of the child in the gospel, that, while he was yet a coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. Mark ix. 20.

Dejected sinner, it is no wonder that thou hast fallen in coming to Jesus Christ: is it not rather to be wondered at, that thou hast not had before this a thousand falls? considering,

1. What fools we are by nature.
2. What weaknesses are in us.

3. Who our implacable enemies are ; mighty powers, the fallen angels.

4. Considering, also, how often the coming man is benighted in his journey, and also what stumbling-blocks do lie in his way.

5. Also his friends (that were so before) now watch for his halting, and seek, by what means they may, to cause him to fall by the hands of their strong ones.

What then? Must we, because of these temptations, incline to fall? No. Must we not fear falls? Yes; "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall." 1 Cor. x. 12. Yet let him not be utterly cast down: the Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up those that are bowed down. Make not light of falls. Yet hast thou fallen? "Ye have," said Samuel, "done all this wickedness; yet turn not aside from following the Lord, but serve the Lord with all your heart; and turn ye not aside—for the Lord will not forsake his people, (and he counteth the coming sinner one of them,) because it hath pleased the Lord to make you his people." 1 Sam. xii. 20-22.

Shall come to me.

Now we come to show what influence there is in this promise to make them come to him. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me." I will speak of this promise—

First. In general.

Secondly. In particular.

In general. This word *shall* is confined to *those* (all) that are given to Christ. "All that

the Father giveth me, *shall* come to me." Hence I conclude,

First. That coming to Jesus Christ aright, is an effect of their being of God given to Christ before. Mark, they shall come. Who? *Those* that are given: they come then, because they were given: thine they were, and thou gavest them me. Now this is indeed a singular comfort to them that are coming in truth to Christ, to think that the reason why they come is, because they were given of the Father before to him. Thus then may the coming soul reason with himself as he comes. Am I coming indeed to Jesus Christ? This coming of mine is not to be attributed to me, or my goodness, but to the grace and gift of God to Christ. God gave first my person to him, and therefore hath now given me a heart to come.

Secondly. This saying, *shall come*, maketh thy coming not only the fruit of the gift of the Father, but also of the purpose of the Son; for these words are the Divine purpose; they show us the heavenly determination of the Son. "The Father hath given them to me, and they *shall*, yea, *they shall* come to me." Christ is as full in his resolution to save those given to him, as is the Father in giving of them. Christ prized the gift of his Father; he will lose nothing of it; he is resolved to save it every whit by his blood, and to raise it up again at the last day: and thus he fulfils his Father's will, and accomplishes his own desires. John vi. 39.

Thirdly. These words, *shall come*, make thy coming to be also the effect of an absolute

promise; coming sinner, thou art included in a promise: thy coming is the fruit of the faithfulness of an absolute promise. It was this promise, by the virtue of which thou at first received strength to come; and this is the promise, by the which thou shalt be effectually brought to him. It was said to Abraham, "At this time will I come, and Sarah *shall have a son.*" This son was Isaac. Mark! *Sarah shall have a son*: there is the promise; and Sarah had a son: there was the fulfilling of the promise: and therefore was Isaac called the child of promise. Gen. xvii. 19; xviii. 10. Rom. ix. 9.

Sarah *shall have a son*: and notwithstanding all the objections her unbelief might urge, still the promise continues to say. Sarah *shall have a son*. Thus you see what virtue there is in an absolute promise. It carrieth enough in itself to accomplish the thing promised, whether there be means or not in us to effect it. Wherefore this promise in the text, being an absolute promise, by virtue of it, not by virtue of ourselves, or by our own inducements, do we come to Jesus Christ, for so are the words of the text; "All that the Father giveth me, *shall come to me.*"

Therefore is every sincere comer to Jesus Christ called also a child of the promise. "Now we, brethren, as *Isaac* was, are the children of promise," Gal. iv. 28; that is, we are the children that God hath promised to Jesus Christ; and given to him; yea, the children that Jesus Christ hath promised, shall come to him. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come."

Fourthly. This word, *shall come*, engages

Christ to communicate all manner of grace to those thus given him, to make them effectually come to him; *they shall come*; that is, not if they will, but if grace, all grace, if power, wisdom, a new heart, and the Holy Spirit, all joining together, can make them come. I say this word, *shall come*, being absolute, hath no dependence upon our own will, or power, or goodness; but it engages for us, even God himself, Christ himself, the Spirit himself. When God had made that absolute promise to Abraham, that Sarah should have a son, "he staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded, that what he had promised he was able also to perform." Rom. iv. 20, 21. He had promised, and had promised absolutely, Sarah *shall* have a son; therefore Abraham looks that he, to wit, God, must fulfil the condition of it. Neither is this expectation of Abraham disapproved by the Holy Ghost, but accounted good and laudable; it being that by which he gives glory to God. The Father hath also given to Christ, a certain number of souls to save; and he himself hath said, *they shall come* to him. Let the church of God, then, live in a joyful expectation of the utmost accomplishment of this promise; for assuredly it shall be fulfilled, and not one thousandth part of a tittle thereof shall fail: "*They shall come to me.*"

And now, before I go any farther, I will more particularly inquire into the nature of an absolute promise.

First. We call that an absolute promise, that is made without any condition; or more fully thus: that is an absolute promise of God, or of Christ, which maketh over to this or that man, any saving spiritual blessing, without a condition to be done on our part, for the obtaining thereof. And this we have in hand is such a one: no one can point out any condition in this text, depending upon any qualification in us, which is not by the same promise concluded shall be by the Lord Jesus effected in us.

Secondly. An absolute promise therefore is unconditional; and that is, it requireth nothing of us that it may be accomplished. It saith not, *they shall, if they will*; but, *they shall*: not they shall if they use the means; but, *they shall*. You may say, that a will, and the use of the means, is supposed, though not expressed. But I answer, no, by no means; that is, as a condition of this promise. If they be at all included in the promise, they are included there, as the fruit of the absolute promise, not as if it expected the qualification to arise from us. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Ps. cx. 3. That is another absolute promise: but doth that promise suppose a willingness in us, as a condition of God's making us willing? They shall be willing, if they are willing: or, they shall be willing, if they will be willing! This is absurd; there is nothing of this supposed. The promise is absolute, as to us, that all it requires for its own accomplishment, is the mighty power of Christ, and his faithfulness to accomplish it.

The difference, therefore, between the absolute and conditional promise, is this :

First. They differ in their terms : the absolute promise says, *I will* and *you shall* ; the other, *I will if you will* ; or, *do this and thou shalt live*. Jer. xxxi. 31-33 ; Ezek. xxxvi. 24-33 ; Heb. viii. 7-12 ; Jer. iv. 1 ; Ezek. xviii. 30-32 ; Matt. xix. 21.

Secondly. They differ in their way of communicating good things to men ; the absolute promise communicates things freely, only of grace ; the other, if there be that qualification in us that the promise calls for, not else.

Thirdly. The absolute promise, therefore, engages God, the other engages us : I mean God only, us only.

Fourthly. Absolute promises must be fulfilled ; conditional may or may not be fulfilled. The absolute ones must be fulfilled, because of the faithfulness of God ; the other may not, because of the unfaithfulness of men.

Fifthly. Absolute promises have therefore a sufficiency in themselves, to bring about their own fulfillings ; the conditional have not so. The absolute promise, therefore, has in itself a fullness of all desired things for us ; and will, when the time of that promise is come, yield to us mortals that which will verily save us ; yea, and make us capable of answering the demands of the promise that is conditional. Wherefore, though there be a real, yea, an eternal difference in these things (with others) between the conditional and absolute promise ; yet again in other respects there is a blessed harmony be-

tween them; as may be seen in these particulars.

First. The conditional promise calls for repentance, the absolute gives it. Acts v. 30, 31.

Secondly. The conditional promise calls for faith, the absolute promise gives it. Zeph. iii. 12; Rom. xv. 12.

Thirdly. The conditional promise calls for a new heart, the absolute promise gives it. Ezek. xxxvi. 26.

Fourthly. The conditional promise calls for holy obedience, the absolute promise gives it, or causes it. Ezek. xxxvi. 27.

And as they harmoniously agree in this; so again, the conditional promise blesses the man, who by the absolute promise is endued with its fruit: as for instance:—

First. The absolute promise makes men upright, and then the conditional follows, saying, “Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the way of the Lord.” Ps. cxix. 1.

Secondly. The absolute promise gives to this man the fear of the Lord, and then the conditional follows, saying, “Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord.” Ps. cxxviii. 1.

Thirdly. The absolute promise gives faith, and then the conditional follows, saying, “Blessed is he that believeth.” Zeph. iii. 12; Luke i. 45.

Fourthly. The absolute promise brings free forgiveness of sins, and the conditional says, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sin is covered.” Rom. iv. 7.

Fifthly. The absolute promise says, that

God's elect shall hold out to the end, then the conditional follows with this blessing: "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Matt. xxiv. 13.

Thus do the promises gloriously serve one another and us, in this their harmonious agreement.

Now the promise under consideration, is an absolute promise: "All that the father giveth me, shall come to me."

This promise, therefore, as is said, has in itself all those things to bestow upon us, that the conditional calls for at our hands. They shall come! Shall they come? Yes, they shall come. But how if they want those things, those graces, power, and heart, without which they cannot come? Why, *shall come* answers all this, and all things else that may in this matter be objected. And here I will take the liberty to amplify things.

Objection 1. But they are dead, dead in trespasses and sins, how shall they then come?

Answer. Why, *shall come* can raise them from this death. "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." Thus, therefore, is this impediment by *shall come* removed out of the way. They shall hear, they shall live.

Object. 2. But they are Satan's captives; he takes them captives at his will, and he is stronger than they; how then can they come?

Ans. Why, *shall come* hath also provided a help for this. Satan had bound that daughter

of Abraham so, that she could by no means lift up herself; but yet *shall come* set her free both in body and soul. Christ will have them turned from the power of Satan to God. But what! must it be, if they turn themselves, or do something to merit of him to turn them? No; he will do it freely, of his own good will. Alas! man, whose soul is possessed with the devil, is turned whithersoever that governor listeth; is taken captive by him, notwithstanding his natural powers, at his will; but what will he do? Will he hold him, when *shall come* puts forth itself? Will he then hinder him from coming to Jesus Christ? No; that cannot be; his power is but the power of a fallen angel; but *shall come* is the word of God: therefore, *shall come* must be fulfilled; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. There were seven devils in Mary Magdalene; too many for her to get from under the power of; but when the time was come that *shall come* was to be fulfilled upon her, they give place, fly from her, and she comes indeed to Jesus Christ; according as it is written, "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me."

The man that was possessed with a legion, Mark v. 9, was too much by them captivated for him, by human force, to come; yea, had he had all the men under heaven to help him, had he that said *he shall come*, withheld his mighty power: but when this promise was to be fulfilled upon him, then he comes, nor could all their power hinder him from coming. It was also this *shall come* that preserved him from death, when by these evil spirits he was hurled

hither and thither ; and it was by God's power that at last he was set at liberty from them, and enabled indeed to come to Christ. "All that the Father giveth me *shall come to me.*"

Object. 3. They shall, you say. But how if they will not ?

Ans. True, there are some men who say, "We are lords ; we will come no more unto thee." Jer. ii. 31. But, as God says in another case, if they are included in those who *shall come to me*, "They shall know whose word shall stand, mine or theirs." Jer. xlv. 28. Here then is the case : we must now see who will be the liar ; he that saith, *I will not*, or he that saith, *he shall come to me. Shall come* was spoken by him that is of power to perform his word. "Son, go work to day in my vineyard," said the Father ; but he answered, and said, "I will not." What now ? Will he be able to stand to his refusal ? Will he pursue his desperate denial ? No ; he afterwards repented and went. But how came he by that repentance ? Why, it was wrapped up for him in the absolute promise ; and, therefore, notwithstanding he said, "*I will not,*" he afterwards repented and went. By this parable, Jesus Christ sets forth the obstinacy of the sinners of the world, as touching their coming to him : they will not come, though threatened—yea, though life be offered them upon condition of coming.

But now, when the absolute promise of God comes to be fulfilled upon them, then they come ; because by that promise a cure is provided against the rebellion of their wills : "Thy

people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Psalm cx. 3. Thy people : what people ? Why the people that thy Father hath given thee. The obstinacy and plague that is in the will of that people, shall be taken away, and they shall be made willing.

He that had seen Paul in the midst of his outrages against Christ, his gospel, and people, would hardly have thought that he would ever have been a follower of Jesus Christ, especially since he went not against his conscience in persecuting of them. He thought, verily, that he ought to do what he did. But he was a chosen vessel, given by the Father to the Son ; and now the time being come of his conversion, behold, he is over-mastered, astonished, and with trembling and reverence, in a moment becomes willing to be obedient to the heavenly call. Acts ix.

And were not they far gone of whom you read, Acts ii., who had their hands and hearts in the murder of the Son of God ; and to show their resolvedness never to repent of that horrid act, said, " His blood be on us and our children ? " But must their obstinacy rule ? Must they be bound to their own ruin, by the rebellion of their stubborn wills ? No, not *those* the Father gave to Christ : wherefore, at the time appointed, the absolute promise takes them in hand, and then they come indeed, crying out to Peter and the rest of the apostles, " Men and brethren, what shall we do ? " No stubbornness of man's will can stand, when God hath absolutely said the contrary.

The Lord spake unto Manasseh, (and to his people by the prophets,) but would he hear ?

No, he would not. But shall Manasseh come off thus? No, he *shall not*. Therefore, he, being also of those whom the Father had given to the Son, comes at last bowing and bending; he humbles himself greatly, and made supplication to the Lord, and prayed unto him, and he was entreated of him, and had mercy upon him. 2 Chron. xxxii. 12.

The thief upon the cross, at first, did rail with his fellow, upon Jesus Christ; but he was one that the Father had given to him. And behold, by virtue of that absolute promise, how soon he leaves his railing, and falls to supplicating the Son of God for mercy! "Lord," saith he, "remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Luke xxiii. 39-42.

Object. 4. They shall come, say you; but how if they be blind, and see not the way? For some are kept off from Christ, not only by the obstinacy of their will, but by the blindness of their mind: now, if they be blind, how shall they come?

Ans. The question is not, are they blind? but, are they within the reach and power of *shall come*? If so, that Christ that said, *they* shall come, will find them eyes, or a guide, or both, to bring them to himself. *Must* is for the King. If they shall come, they shall come; no impediment shall hinder.

The Thessalonians' darkness did not hinder them from being the children of light: "I am come," said Christ, "that they which see not, might see." And if he saith, "See, ye blind

that have eyes," who shall hinder it? Eph. v. 8; John ix. 39; Isa. xliii. 8.

This promise, therefore, as I said, hath in itself all things that are necessary to the complete fulfilling of it. *They shall come.* But it is objected, that they are blind. Well, *Shall come* is still the same, and continueth to say, *they shall come to me*: therefore he saith again, "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them." Isa. xlii. 16.

Mark, I will bring them, though they be blind; I will bring them by a way they knew not; I will, I will; and therefore, *they shall come to me.*

Object. 5. But how if they have exceeded many in sin, and so made themselves far more abominable? They are the ring-leading sinners in the country, the town, or family.

Ans. What then? Shall that hinder the execution of *shall come*? It is not transgressions, nor sins, nor all their transgressions in all their sins (if they are given by the Father to Christ to save them) that shall hinder this promise, that it should not be fulfilled upon them. "In those days, and in that time," saith the Lord, "the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and not be found." Jer. i. 20. Not that they had none; for they abounded in transgression, Ezek. xvi. 48; but God would pardon, cover, hide, and put them away, by virtue of his absolute promise, by which

they are given to Christ to save them. "And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor, before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness, and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it. Jer. xxxiii. 8, 9.

Object. 6. But how if they have not faith and repentance? How shall they come then?

Ans. Why, he that saith, *they shall come*, shall he not make it out? If they shall come, they shall come: and he that hath said, *they shall come*, if faith and repentance be the way to come, as indeed they are, then faith and repentance shall be given to them; for *shall come* must be fulfilled on them.

First. Faith shall be given them: "I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord." "There shall be a root of Jesse, and he that shall rise to reign over the Gentiles; in him shall the Gentiles trust." Zeph. iii. 12; Rom. xv. 12.

Secondly. They shall have repentance. He is exalted to give repentance. "They shall come weeping, and seeking the Lord their God." And again, "With weeping and with supplications will I lead them." Jer. xxxi. 9.

I told you before, that an absolute promise hath all conditional ones included in it, and also

provision to answer all those qualifications that they propound to him that seeks for their benefit. And it must be so ; for if *shall come* be an absolute promise, as indeed it is, then it must be fulfilled upon every one of those concerned therein. I say it must be fulfilled, if God can, by grace, and his absolute will, fulfil it. Besides, coming and believing is all one, according to John vi. 35, "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst."

Then, when he saith, they *shall come*, it is as much as to say, they shall believe, and consequently repent, to the saving of the soul. So, then, the present want of faith and repentance cannot make this promise of God of none effect. I will give them a heart, I will give them my Spirit, I will give them repentance, I will give them faith. Mark these words ! "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." But how came he to be a new creature, since none can create but God ? Why, God indeed doth make them new creatures. "Behold," saith he, "I make all things new." And hence then it follows, even after he had said, they are "new creatures, and all things are of God," that all this new creation stands in the several operations, and special workings of the Spirit of grace, who is God. 2 Cor. v. 17, 18.

Object. 7. But how shall they escape all those dangerous opinions, that, like rocks and quicksands, are in the way in which they are going ?

Ans. Indeed, this age is an age of errors, if ever there was an age of errors in the world ;

but yet the gift of the Father, laid claim to by the Son in the text, must needs escape them, and in conclusion come to him. Not but that they may be assaulted by them ; yea, and also for the time, entangled and detained by them from the bishop of their souls ; but the chains and fetters, that those given to Christ are entangled in, shall be broken, and they *shall come*, because he hath said they shall come to him.

And therefore, of such it is said, God will guide them with his eye, with his counsel, by his Spirit, and that in the way of peace ; by the springs of water, and into all truth. Ps. xxxii. 8. ; lxxiii. 24 ; John xvi. 13 ; Luke i. 79. So then he that hath such a guide, (and all that the Father giveth to Christ shall have it,) shall escape those dangers, he shall not err in the way ; yea, though he be a fool, he shall not err therein. Isa. xxxv. 8. For of every such a one it is said, “Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.” Isa. xxx. 21.

There were thieves and robbers before Christ's coming, as there are also now : but, saith he, the sheep did not hear them.

And why did they not hear them, but because they were under the power of *shall come*, that absolute promise, that had the grace in itself to make them able rightly to distinguish voices ? “My sheep hear my voice.” But how came they to hear it ? Why, to them it is given to know and to hear, and that distinguishingly. John x. 16 ; v. 27.

Further, the very plain sentence of the text makes provision against all these things; for, saith it, "All that the Father giveth me, *shall* come to me;" that is, shall not be stopped, or be allured to take up any where short of *me*; nor shall they turn aside, to abide with any besides *me*.

Shall come to *me*.

To me! By these words there is further intimated (though not expressed) a double cause of their coming to him.

First. There is in Christ a fullness of all that is needful to make us happy.

Secondly. Those that indeed come to him, do therefore come to him, that they may receive it at his hand.

As for the first of these, there is in Christ a fullness or all-sufficiency of all that is needful to make us happy. Hence it is said, "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fullness dwell." And again, "Of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." Col. i. 19; John i. 16. It is also said of him, that his riches is unsearchable: "The unsearchable riches of Christ." Eph. iii. 8. Hear what he saith of himself: "Riches and honor are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgment; that I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures." Prov. viii. 18-21.

Thus in general. But more particularly :

First. There is that light in Christ that is sufficient to lead them out of, and from, all that darkness, in the midst of which all others but them that come to him, stumble, and fall, and perish. “I am the light of the world,” saith he : “he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” John viii. 12. Man by nature is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knows not whither he goes, for darkness has blinded his eyes ; neither can any thing but Jesus Christ lead men out of this darkness. Natural conscience cannot do it ; the ten commandments, though in the hearts of men, cannot do it. This prerogative belongs only to Jesus Christ.

Secondly. There is life in Christ, that is to be found nowhere else ; John v. 40 ; life, as a principle in the soul, by which it shall be aided and enabled to do that which through him is pleasing to God : “He that believeth on,” or cometh to “me,” saith he, “as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.” John vii. 38. Without this life a man is dead, whether he be bad, or whether he be good ; that is, good in his own and other men’s esteem. There is no true and eternal life, but what is in the *me* that speaketh in the text.

There is also life, for those that come to him, to be had by faith in his flesh and blood ; “He that eateth me, shall live by me.” John vi. 57.

And this is a life against that death that comes by the guilt of sin, and the curse of the law, under which all men are, and for ever must be,

unless they go to him who speaks in the text : “ Whoso findeth me,” saith he, “ findeth life ;” deliverance from that everlasting death and destruction, which without me he shall be devoured by. Prov. viii. 35.

Nothing is more desirable than life, to him that hath in himself the sentence of condemnation ; and here only is life to be found. *This life*, eternal life, is in his Son ; 1 John v. 10 ; that is, in him that saith in the text, “ All that the Father hath given me, shall come to me.”

Thirdly. The person speaking in the text, is he alone by whom poor sinners have admittance to, and acceptance with the Father, because of the glory of his righteousness, by, and in which, he presents them amiable and spotless in his sight ; neither is there any way besides him so to come to the Father ; “ I am the way,” says he, “ the truth, and the life ; no man cometh to the Father, but by me.” John xiv. 6. All other ways to God are dead ; the destroying cherubims stand with flaming swords, turning every way to keep all others from his presence ; Gen. iii. 24 ; I say, all others but them that come by him.

“ I am the door ; by me,” saith he, “ if any man enter in, he shall be saved.” John x. 9.

The person speaking in the text is he, and only he, that can give stable and everlasting peace ; therefore, saith he, “ my peace I give unto you :” my peace, which is peace with God, peace of conscience, and that of an everlasting duration. My peace, peace that cannot be matched, “ not as the world giveth, give I unto

you ;” for the world’s peace is but carnal, and transitory ; but mine is divine and eternal. Hence it is called *the peace of God, that passeth all understanding.*

Fourthly. The person speaking in the text, hath enough of all things, truly, spiritually good, to satisfy the desire of every longing soul. And “Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.” And “I will give, unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.” John vii. 37 ; Rev. xxi. 6.

Fifthly. With the person speaking in the text is power to perfect and defend, and deliver those that come to him for safeguard. “All power,” saith he, “is given unto me, in heaven and in earth.” Matt. xxviii. 18.

Thus might I multiply instances of this nature, in abundance : but,

Sixthly. They that in truth do come to him, do therefore come to him, that they may receive it at his hand. They come for light, they come for life, they come for reconciliation with God ; they also come for peace ; they come that their souls may be satisfied with spiritual good, and that they may be protected by him against all spiritual and eternal damnation ; and he alone is able to give them all this, to the fulfilling of their joy to the full, as they also find when they come to him.

This is evident,

First. From the plain declaration of those that already are come to him. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our

Lord Jesus Christ; by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Rom. v. 1, 2.

Secondly. It is evident, also, in that while they keep their eyes upon him, they never desire to change him for another, or to add to themselves some other thing, together with him, to make up their spiritual joy: "God forbid," said Paul, "that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "Yea, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Phil. iii. 8. 9.

Thirdly. It is evident, also, by their earnest desires that others might be made partakers of their blessedness. "Brethren," said Paul, "my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved;" that is, by that way that he expected to be saved himself; as he saith also to the Galatians: "Brethren," saith he, "I beseech you be as I am, for I am as ye are:" that is, I am a sinner as ye are. Now I beseech you seek for life, as I am seeking of it;—as if he would say, "for there is a sufficiency in the Lord Jesus both for me and you."

Fourthly. It is evident, also, by the triumph that such men make over all their enemies, both bodily and spiritual. "Now thanks be to God,"

said Paul, "who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." And, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" And again, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." 2 Cor. ii. 14; Rom. viii. 35; 1 Cor. xv. 55-57.

Fifthly. It is evident, also, for that they are made by the glory of that which they have found in him, to suffer and endure what the devil and hell itself hath, or could invent, as a means to separate them from him. Again, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? (as it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.) Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Rom. viii. 35-39.

Shall come to me. Oh, the heart-attracting glory that is in Jesus Christ, when he is discovered to draw those to him that are given to him of the Father! Therefore, those that came of old rendered this as the cause of their coming to him: "And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father." John i. 14.

And the reason why others come not, but perish in their sins, is for want of a sight of his glory. "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them." 2 Cor. iv. 3, 4.

There is therefore heart-drawing glory in Jesus Christ, which, when discovered, draws the man to him; wherefore, by shall *come to me*, Christ may mean, when his glory is discovered, then they must come, then they shall *come to me*. Therefore, as the true comers come with weeping and relenting, as being sensible of their own vileness; so again, it is said, that "the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away;" that is, at the sight of the glory of that grace that shows itself to them now, in the face of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the hopes that they may now have, of being with him in the heavenly tabernacles. Therefore it saith again, "with gladness and rejoicing shall they be brought; they shall enter into the King's palace." Isa. xxxv. 10; Ps. xlv. 15.

There is therefore heart-attracting glory in the Lord Jesus Christ; which, when discovered, subjects the heart to the word, and makes us come to him.

It is said of Abraham, that when he dwelt in Mesopotamia, the God of glory appeared unto him, Acts vii. 3, saying, "Get thee out of thy

country." And what then? Why, away he went from his house and friends, and all the world could not stay him. Now, as the Psalmist says, "Who is this king of glory?"—He answers, "The Lord, mighty in battle." And who was that, but he that spoiled principalities and powers when he did hang on the tree, triumphing over them thereon? And who was that but Jesus Christ, even the person speaking in the text? Therefore he saith of Abraham, "He saw this day;" yea, saith he to the Jews, "your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day, and he saw it, and was glad." Ps. xxiv. 8; Col. ii. 15; John viii. 56.

Indeed the carnal man says of Christ, at least in his heart, Isa. liii. 1-3, "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." This he speaks, as having never seen him. But they that stand in his word, by the help of his Holy Spirit, they will tell you other things. "But we," say they, "all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." 2 Cor. iii. 18. They see glory in his person, glory in his undertakings, glory in the merit of his blood, and glory in the perfection of his righteousness; yea, heart-affecting, and heart-changing glory.

Indeed his glory is veiled, and cannot be seen, but as discovered by the Father. Matt. xi. 27. It is veiled with flesh, with meanness of descent from the flesh, and with that ignominy and shame that attended him in the flesh; but they that can, in God's light, see through these things, they

shall see glory in him ; yea, such glory as will draw and pull their hearts unto him.

Moses was the adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter ; and, for aught I know, had been king at last, had he then conformed to the present vanities that were there at court ; but he could not, he would not do it. Why, what was the matter ? Why, he saw more in the word of Christ (bear with the expression) than he saw in the best of all the treasures of the land of Egypt. He " refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter ; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt : for he had respect unto the recompense of reward. He forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king." But what emboldened him thus to do ? He had a sight of the person speaking in the text : " he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." But I say, would a sight of Jesus have thus taken away Moses' heart from a crown, and a kingdom, &c, had he not by that sight seen more in him, than was to be seen in them ? Heb. xi. 24-27.

Therefore, when he saith, shall *come to me*, he means, they shall have a discovery of the grace that is in him ; and the beauty and glory of that, is of such virtue, that it constrains and forces, with a blessed violence, the hearts of those that are given to him.

Moses, of whom we spake before, was no child when he was thus taken with the beauteous glory of his Lord. He was forty years old,

and so consequently was able, being a man of that wisdom and opportunity as he was, to make the best judgment of the things, and of the goodness of them, that were before him in the land of Egypt. But he, even he it was, that set such low esteem upon the glory of Egypt, as to count it not worth the meddling with, when he had a sight of his Lord Jesus Christ. This wicked world thinks, that the fancies of a heaven, and a happiness hereafter, may serve well enough to take the heart of such as either have not the world's good things to delight in, or that are fools, and know not how to delight themselves therein. But let them know again, that we have had men of all ranks and qualities, who have been taken with the glory of the Lord Jesus, and have left all to follow him: as Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon; and who not, that had either wit or grace to favor heavenly things? Indeed, none can stand off from him, nor any longer hold out against him, to whom he reveals the glory of his grace.

And him that cometh to me (I will in nowise cast out.)

By these words our Lord Jesus doth set forth the great goodness of his nature towards the coming sinner. Before he said, *they shall come*; and he declareth that with heart and affections he will receive them. But, by the way, let me speak one word or two on the seeming conditionality of this promise, with which now I have to do. "And him that cometh to me, I

will in nowise cast out." Whence it is evident (some may say) that Christ's receiving us to mercy, depends upon our coming, and so our salvation by Christ is conditional: if we come, we shall be received; if not, we shall not; for that is fully intimated by the words. The promise of reception is only to him that cometh: "*and him that cometh.*" I answer, that the coming, in these words mentioned as a condition of being received to life, is that which is promised, yea, concluded to be effected in us by the promise going before. In those latter words, coming to Christ is implicitly required of us: and in the words before, that grace that can make us come is positively promised to us. "All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." We come to Christ, because it is said, we shall come: so that the condition which is expressed by Christ in these latter words, is absolutely promised in the words before. "They shall come, and I will not cast them out."

And him that cometh.

He saith not, and him that is come, but "him that cometh."

To speak of these words:—1. In general.
2. More particularly:

In general: They suggest to us these four things:

First. That Jesus Christ doth build upon it, that since the Father gave his people to him, they shall be enabled to come to him. As if he should say, I know that since they are given to

me, they shall be enabled to come unto me. He saith not, if they come, or I suppose they will come ; but, *and him that cometh*. By these words, therefore, he shows us, that he addresseth himself to the receiving of them whom the Father gave to him, to save them.

Secondly. Christ also suggested by these words, that he very well knoweth who are given to him : not by their coming to him, but by their being given to him. “All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me ; and him that cometh,” &c. This “him” he knoweth to be one that the Father hath given him ; and therefore he receiveth him, even because the Father hath given him to him. John x. “I know my sheep,” saith he : “Other sheep I have,” said he, “which are not of this fold ;” not of the Jewish church ; but those that lie in their sins, even the rude and barbarous Gentiles. Therefore, when Paul was afraid to stay at Corinth, from a supposition that some mischief might befall him there ; “Be not afraid,” said the Lord Jesus to him, “but speak, and hold not thy peace ; for I have much people in this city.” Acts xviii. 9, 10. The people that the Lord here speaks of, were not at this time accounted his, by reason of a work of conversion that already had passed upon them, but by virtue of the gift of the Father, for he had given them unto him ; therefore was Paul to stay here, to speak the word of the Lord to them, that by his speaking, the Holy Ghost might effectually work in their souls, causing them to come to him, who was also ready with heart and soul to receive them.

Thirdly. Christ by these words also suggesteth, that no more come unto him than indeed are given him of the Father : for the “him” in this place, is one of the “all” that by Christ was mentioned before. “All that the Father giveth me shall come to me ; and every ‘him’ of that ‘all’ I will in nowise cast out.” This the apostle insinuates, where he saith, “He gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers ; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ : till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephes. iv. 11–13.

Mark, as in the text, so here, he speaketh of all ; “until we all come.” We all ! All who ? Doubtless, all that the Father giveth to Christ. This is farther insinuated, because he calls this “all” the body of Christ, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ : by which he means, the universal number given ; to wit, the true elect church ; which is said to be his body and fullness. Ephes. i. 22, 23.

Fourthly. Christ Jesus by these words farther suggests, that he is well content with this gift of the Father to him : “All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me : and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out.” I will heartily, willingly, and joyfully receive him.

And him. There are divers sorts of persons that the Father hath given to Jesus Christ ; they are not all of one rank, of one quality. Some are

high, some low ; some are wise, some fools ; some are more civil, and complying with the law, some more profane, and averse to him and his gospel. Now since those that are given to him are in some sense so diverse ; and again, since he yet saith, and him that cometh, &c, he by that doth give us to understand, that he is for him that the Father hath given him, and that cometh to him. He is satisfied with his Father's choice. He will not alter or change it ; a good for a bad, or a bad for a good ; Lev. xxvii. 9, 10 ; but will take him as he is, and will save his soul.

There is many a sad wretch given by the Father to Jesus Christ ; but not one of them all is despised or slighted by him. It is said of those that the Father hath given to Christ, that they have done worse than all the heathen ; that they were murderers, thieves, drunkards, unclean persons, and what not ; but he has received them, washed them, and saved them.

And him. Let him be as red as blood, let him be as red as crimson : some men are crimson sinners, sinners of a double dye ; dipped and dipped again, before they come to Jesus Christ. Art thou, that readest these lines, such a one ? Speak out, man ; art thou such a one ? And art thou now coming to Jesus Christ for the mercy of justification, that thou mightest be made white in his blood, and be covered with his righteousness ? Fear not ; for as much as this thy coming betokens that thou art of the number of them that the Father hath given to Christ, so he will in nowise cast thee out. " Come now," saith Christ, " and let us reason together :

though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Isa. i. 18.

And him. There was many a strange "him" came to Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh ; but he received them all, without turning any away ; "speaking unto them of the kingdom of God, and healing such as had need of healing." Luke ix. 11 ; iv. 40. These words, *and him*, are therefore words to be wondered at : that not one of them, who by virtue of the Father's gift, and drawing, are coming to Jesus Christ ; I say, that not one of them, whatever they have been, should be rejected, or set by, but admitted to share in his saving grace. It is said in Luke, that the people "wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." Luke iv. 22. Now this is one of the gracious words ; these words are like drops of honey, as it is said, Prov. xvi. 24, "Pleasant words are as a honey-comb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." These are gracious words indeed ; even as full as a faithful and merciful high-priest could speak them. Luther saith, "When Christ speaketh, he hath a mouth as wide as heaven and earth:" that is, to speak fully to the encouragement of every sinful "him" that is coming to Jesus Christ. And that this word is certain, hear how himself confirms it : "Heaven and earth," saith he, "shall pass away ; but my words shall not pass away." Matt. xxiv. 35.

It is also confirmed by the testimony of the four Evangelists, who gave a faithful relation of his loving reception of all sorts of coming sinners,

whether they were publicans, harlots, thieves, possessed of devils, and what not. Luke xix. 7; Matt. xi. 19; Luke xv. 1, 2; xxiii. 41, 42; Mark v. 1-7.

This then shows us—

First. The greatness of the merits of Christ.

Secondly. The willingness of his heart, to impute them for life to the greatest sinners, if they will come to him.

First. This shows us the greatness of the merits of Christ; for it must not be supposed, that his words express more than they really mean. He is strong to execute; he can do as well as speak. He can do exceeding abundantly more than we can ask or think, even to the uttermost of his word. Ephes. iii. 20.

Now, then, since he inclines any to come to him, it must be concluded, that he can save to the uttermost sin, any coming to him.

Coming sinner, what promise thou findest in the word of Christ, strain it whither thou canst, so thou dost not corrupt it, and his blood and merits will answer all. What the word saith, or any true consequence that is drawn therefrom, we may boldly venture upon. As here in the text he saith, “and him that cometh,” indefinitely, without the least intimation of the rejection of any, though never so great, if he be a coming sinner; take it then for granted, that thou, whoever thou art, if coming, art intended in these words; neither shall it injure Christ at all, if, as Benhadad’s servants served Ahab, thou shalt take him at his word. Now, saith the text, *the men did diligently observe, whether*

any thing would come from him, to wit, any word of grace, and did hastily catch it. And it happened, that Ahab had called Benhadad his brother. The men replied, therefore, Thy brother Benhadad ! catching him at his words. 1 Kings xx. 33. Sinner, coming sinner, approach Jesus Christ thus, and he will take it kindly at thy hands. When he, in his argument, called the Canaanitish woman *Dog*, she quickly noticed it, and said, “ Truth, Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” I say, she caught him thus in his words, and he took it kindly, saying, “ O woman, great is thy faith : be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” Matt. xv. 27, 28.

Secondly. We may learn from these words, the willingness of Christ to impute his mercies for life, to the great, if coming sinner. “ And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out.”

The awakening coming sinner doth not so easily question the power of Christ, as his willingness to save him : “ Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst.” Mark i. 40. He did not put the if upon his power, but upon his will : he concluded he could, but he was not fully persuaded that he would. But we have the same ground to believe he will, as we have to believe he can ; and, indeed, ground for both in the word of God. If he was not willing, why did he promise ? Why did he say he would receive the coming sinner ? Coming sinner take notice of this : we are accustomed to plead promises with men, and why not with God himself ? I am sure we have no

more ground for one than the other, for we have to plead the promise of a faithful God. Jacob took him there: "Thou saidst," said he, "I will surely do thee good," Gen. xxxii. 12; and from this promise, he concluded, that it followed in reason that he must be willing.

The text also gives some ground for us to draw the same conclusion: "And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." Here is his willingness asserted, as well as his power suggested. It is worth your observation, that Abraham's faith considered rather God's power than his willingness; that is, he drew his conclusion, "I shall have a child," from the power that was in God to fulfil the promise to him; for he concluded he was willing to give him one, else he would not have promised one. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform." Rom. iv. 20, 21. But was not his faith exercised or tried about his willingness too? No; there was no show of reason for that, because he had promised it. Indeed, had he not promised it, he might lawfully have doubted it; but since he had promised it, there was left no ground at all for doubting, because his willingness to give a son, was demonstrated in his promising him a son. These words, therefore, are sufficient ground to encourage any coming sinner, that Christ is willing to receive him; and since he hath power also to do what he will, there is no ground at all left to the coming sinner, any more to doubt;

but to come in full hope of acceptance, and of being received into grace and mercy. And him that cometh. He saith not, and him that has come; but, and him that cometh; that is, and him whose heart begins to move after me, who is leaving all for my sake; *him*, who is looking out, who is on his journey to me. We must therefore distinguish between coming, and being come to Jesus Christ. He that has come, has obtained of him more sensibly what he felt he wanted, than he has who is yet only coming to him.

A man that has come to Christ, hath the advantage of him that is only coming to him; and that in seven things:

First. He that has come to Christ, is nearer to him than he that is but coming to him; for he that is but coming to him, is yet, in some sense, at a distance from him; as it is said of the coming prodigal: "But when he was yet a great way off." Luke xv. 20. Now he that is nearer to him, hath the best sight of him; and so is able to make the best judgment of his wonderful grace and glory, as God saith: "Let them come near, then let them speak." And as the apostle John saith: "And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." Isa. xli. 1; 1 John iv. 14. He that is not yet come, though he is coming, is not fit, not being capable to make that judgment of the worth and glory of the grace of Christ, as he is, that is come to him, and hath seen and beheld it. Therefore, sinner, suspend thy judgment till thou art come nearer.

Secondly. He that has come to Christ has the advantage of him who is only coming, in that he is relieved of his burden ; for he who is only coming, is still weary and heavy laden. Matt. xi. 28. He that is come, has cast his burden upon the Lord ; by faith he hath seen himself released therefrom ; but he that is only coming, hath it yet, as to sense and feeling, upon his own shoulders. "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden," implies that their burden, though they are coming, is yet upon them, and so will be, till indeed they are come to him.

Thirdly. He that has come to Christ, has the advantage of him who is only coming, in this also ; namely, he hath drank of the sweet and soul-refreshing water of life ; but he who is only coming, hath not : "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." John vii. 37.

Mark, he must come unto him before he drinks ; according to that saying of the prophet : "Ho ! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." He drinketh not as he cometh, but when he is come to the waters. Isa. iv. 1.

Fourthly. He that is come to Christ hath the advantage of him that as yet is only coming, in this also ; to wit, he is not terrified with the noise, and, as I may call it, hue and cry, which the avenger of blood makes at the heels of him who yet is only coming to him. When the slayer was upon his flight to the city of his refuge, he had the noise or fear of the avenger of blood at his heels ; but when he was come to the city, and was entered thereinto, that noise ceased. Even so it is with him that is coming to Jesus

Christ. He heareth many a dreadful sound in his ear ; sounds of death and damnation, which he that is come is at present freed from. Therefore, he saith, " Come, and I will give you rest." And so he saith again, " We that have believed do enter into rest." Heb. iv. 3.

Fifthly. He, therefore, that is come to Christ, is not subject to those dejections, and castings down, by reason of the rage and assaults of the evil one, as is the man who is only coming to Jesus Christ, though he has temptations too. (" And as he was yet coming, the devil threw him down and tare him." Luke ix. 42.) For he has those experimental comforts and refreshments, in his treasury, to present himself with in times of temptation and conflict, which he who is only coming, has not.

Sixthly. He that is come to Christ has the advantage of him who is only coming to him, in this also ; to wit, he hath upon him the wedding garment, &c. But he that is coming has not. The prodigal, when coming home to his father, was clothed with nothing but rags, and was tormented with hunger. But when he was come, the best robe was brought out ; also the gold ring, and the shoes ; yea, they were put upon him to his great rejoicing. The fatted calf was killed for him ; the music was struck up to make him merry : and thus also the father himself said of him : " This my son was dead, and is alive again ; was lost, and is found." Luke xv. 18-32.

Seventhly. In a word, he that is come to Christ, his groans and tears, his doubts and

fears, are turned into songs and praises ; for that he hath now received the atonement, and the earnest of his inheritance. But he who is only yet coming, hath not those praises, nor songs of deliverance with him ; nor has he, as yet, received the atonement and earnest of his inheritance, which is the sealing testimony of the Holy Ghost, through the sprinkling of the blood of Christ upon his conscience ; for he is not come. Rom. v. 11 ; Eph. i. 13 ; Heb. xii. 22-24.

And him that *cometh*.

There is farther to be gathered from this word *cometh*, the following particulars :

First. That Jesus Christ hath his eye upon, and takes notice of, the first moving of the heart of a sinner after him. Coming sinner, thou canst not move with desires after Christ, but he sees the work of those desires in thy heart. All my desire, said David, is before thee, and my groaning is not hid from thee. Ps. xxxviii. 9. This he spake, as he was coming (after he had back-slidden) to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is said of the prodigal, that while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had his eye upon him. Luke xv. 20.

When Nathanael was come to Jesus Christ, the Lord said to them that stood before him, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile." But Nathanael answered him, "Whence knowest thou me?" Jesus answered, "Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee." There, I suppose, Nathanael was pouring out his soul to God for

mercy, or that he would give him good understanding about the Messiah to come. And Jesus saw all the workings of his honest heart at that time. John i. 47, 48.

Zaccheus, also, had some secret movings of the heart, such as they were, towards Jesus Christ, when he ran before, and climbed up the tree to see him ; and the Lord Jesus had his eye upon him : therefore, when he was come to the place, he looked up to him, and bade him come down ; “ For to-day,” said he, “ I must abide at thy house :” to wit, in order to the farther completing the work of grace in his soul. Luke xix. 1-6. Remember this, coming sinner.

Secondly. As Jesus Christ hath his eye upon, so he hath his heart open to receive the coming sinner. This is verified by the text : “ And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out.” This is also discovered by his preparing the way, in his making of it easy to the coming sinner ; which preparation is manifest by those blessed words, “ I will in nowise cast out ;” and, “ When he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.” Luke xv. 20. All these expressions do strongly prove, that the heart of Christ is open to receive the coming sinner.

Thirdly. As Jesus Christ hath his eye upon, and his heart open to receive ; so he hath resolved already, that nothing shall alienate his heart from receiving the coming sinner. No sins of the coming sinner, nor the length of time that he hath abode in them, shall by any means prevail

with Jesus Christ to reject him. Coming sinner, thou art coming to a loving Lord Jesus.

Fourthly. These words are therefore dropped from his blessed mouth, on purpose that the coming sinner might take encouragement to continue on his journey, until he come indeed to Jesus Christ. It was doubtless a great encouragement to blind Bartimeus, that Jesus Christ stood still, and called him, when he was crying, "Jesus thou son of David, have mercy upon me : " therefore it is said he cast away his garment, rose up, and came to Jesus. Mark x. 46-52. Now, if a call to come, hath such encouragement in it, what is a promise of receiving such, but an encouragement much more ? And observe, though he had a call to come, yet not having a promise, his faith was forced to work upon a mere consequence, saying, he calls me ; and surely since he calls me, he will grant me my desire. Ah ! but coming sinner, thou hast no need to go so far about, as to draw consequences, because thou hast plain promises : "And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." Here is full, plain, yea, as great encouragement as one can desire. For, suppose thou wast admitted to make a promise thyself, and Christ, should attest that he would fulfil it upon the sinner that cometh to him ? Couldst thou make a better promise ? Couldst thou invent a more full, free, or larger promise ? A promise that looks at the first movings of the heart after Jesus Christ. A promise that declares, yea, that engages Christ Jesus to open his heart to receive the coming sinner : yea, farther, a promise that demonstrates that the Lord

Jesus is resolved freely to receive, and will in no-wise cast out, nor means to reject the soul of the coming sinner. For all this is contained in the promise, and doth naturally flow therefrom.

And him that *cometh*.

There are two sorts of sinners that are coming to Jesus Christ.

First. Him that hath never, until now, began to come.

Secondly. Him that came formerly, and after that went back; but hath since bethought himself, and is now coming again.

Both these sorts of sinners are intended by the *him* in the text, as is evident; because both are now the coming sinners.

And him that *cometh*, &c.

For the first of these; the sinner that hath never, until now, began to come, his way is more easy. I do not say, more plain and open, to come to Christ, than is the other; (those last having the clog of a guilty conscience for the sin of backsliding;) but all the encouragement of the gospel, with the invitations therein contained to coming sinners, are as free and as open to the one as to the other; so that they may, with the same freedom and liberty as from the word, both alike claim interest in the promise. All things are ready; all things for the coming backsliders, as well as for the others. Come to the wedding; "And let him that is athirst come." Matt. xxii. 1-4; Rev. xxii. 17.

But, having spoken of the first of these

already, I shall here pass them by ; and speak a word or two to him that is coming, after backsliding, to Jesus Christ for life.

Thy way, O thou sinner of a double dye, thy way is open to come to Jesus Christ : I mean thee, whose heart, after long backsliding, doth think of turning to him again. Thy way, I say, is open to him, as is the way of the other sorts of comers ; as appears by what follows :

First. Because the text makes no exception against thee. It doth not say, and any *him* but a backslider ; any but him. The text doth not thus object, but indefinitely openeth wide its golden arms to every coming soul, without the least exception ; therefore thou mayest come. And take heed that thou shut not that door by unbelief, which God has opened by his grace.

Secondly. Nay, the text is so far from excepting against thy coming, that it strongly suggesteth, that thou art one of the souls intended, O thou coming backslider ; else why need that clause to have been so inserted, “ I will in no-wise cast out ? ” As if he should say, though those that come now, are such as have formerly backslidden, I will in nowise cast away the fornicator, the covetous, the railer, the drunkard, or other common sinners, nor yet the backslider neither.

Thirdly. That the backslider is intended, is evident :

First. For that he is sent to by name, “ Go, tell his disciples and Peter.” Mark xvi. 7. But Peter was a godly man. True, but he was also a backslider, yea, a desperate backslider : he had

denied his Master once, twice, thrice, cursing and swearing that he knew him not. If this was not backsliding; if this was not a high and eminent backsliding; yea, a higher backsliding than thou art capable of, I have thought amiss.

Again, when David had backslidden, and had committed adultery and murder in his backsliding, he must be sent to by name. And, saith the text, The Lord sent Nathan to David. And he sent him to tell him, after he had brought him to unfeigned acknowledgment, the Lord hath also put away, or forgiven thy sin. 2 Sam. xii. 1. He was accepted, and that with gladness, at the first step he took in his returning to Christ; for the first step of the backslider's return, is to say sensibly and unfeignedly, I have sinned; but he had no sooner said thus, than a pardon was freely given. And Nathan said unto David, "The Lord hath also put away thy sin."

Secondly. As the person of the backslider is mentioned by name, so also is his sin, that, if possible, thy objections against thy returning to Christ, may be taken out of thy way: I say, thy sin is also mentioned by name, and mixed, as mentioned, with words of grace and favor: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." Hos. xiv. 4. What sayest thou now, backslider?

Thirdly. Nay, farther, thou art not only mentioned by name, and thy sin by the nature of it; but thou thyself, who art a returning backslider, put,

First. Among God's Israel: "Return, thou

backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever." Jer. iii. 12.

Secondly. Thou art put among his children, among his children to whom he is married: "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you." Jer. iii. 14.

Thirdly. Yea, after all this, as if his heart was so full of grace for them, that he was pressed until he had uttered it before them, he adds, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings."

Fourthly. Nay, farther, the Lord hath considered, that the shame of thy sin hath stopped thy mouth, and made thee almost a prayerless man; and therefore he saith unto thee, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, 'Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.'" See his grace, that himself should put words of encouragement into the heart of a backslider; as he saith in another place, "I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by the arms." This is teaching them to go indeed, to hold them up by their arms. Hos. xiv. 2; xi. 3.

From what hath been said, I conclude, even as I said before, that the him in the text, and him that cometh, includes both these sorts of sinners, and therefore both should freely come.

Quest. But where doth Jesus Christ, in all the words of the New Testament, expressly speak to a returning backslider with words of grace and peace? For what you have urged as yet from the New Testament, is nothing but con-

sequences drawn from the text. Indeed it is a full text for carnal, ignorant sinners that come ; but to me, who am a backslider, it yields but little relief.

Ans. First. How ! but little encouragement from the text, when it is said, “ I will in nowise cast out ! ” What more could have been said ? What is here omitted that might have been inserted, to make the promise more full and free ? Nay, take all the promises in the Bible, all the freest promises, with all the variety of expressions of what nature or extent soever, and they can but amount to the expressions of this very promise, “ I will in nowise cast out : ” I will for nothing, by no means, upon no account, however they have backslidden, however they have provoked, cast out the coming sinner. But,

Secondly. Thou sayest, Where doth Jesus Christ, in all the words of the New Testament, speak to a returning backslider with words of grace and peace : that is, under the name of a backslider ?

Ans. There are so many examples of receiving backsliders, that there is the less need of express words to that intent. One promise, as the text is, with those examples that are annexed, are instead of many promises. And besides, I reckon that the act of receiving is of as much, if not of more encouragement, than is a bare promise to receive ; for receiving is as the promise, and the fulfilling of it too. So that in the Old Testament thou hast the promise, and in the New, the fulfilling of it ; and that in many examples.

First. In Peter.—Peter denied his Master, once, twice, thrice, and that with an open oath ; yet Christ receives him again without the least hesitation. Yea, he slips, stumbles, falls again in downright dissimulation, and that to the hurt and fall of many others ; but Christ neither makes that a bar to his salvation, but receives him again at his return, as if he knew nothing of the fault.

Secondly. The rest of the disciples, even all of them, backslide, and leave the Lord Jesus in his greatest straits : “ Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled ; ” they returned (as he had foretold) every one to his own, and left him alone ; but this also he passes over as a very light matter ; not that it was so indeed in itself, but the abundance of grace that was in him did lightly roll it away ; for after his resurrection, when at first he appeared unto them, he gives them not the least check for their perfidious dealing with him, but salutes them with words of grace, saying ; “ All hail, be not afraid, peace be to you : all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” True, he rebuked them for their unbelief, for the which thou deservest the same ; for it is unbelief that alone puts Christ and his benefits from us. Matt. xxvi. 56 ; John xvi. 32 ; Matt. xxviii. 9, 10, 18 ; Luke xxiv. 39 ; Mark xvi. 14.

Thirdly. The man that, after a large profession, had committed a high transgression, even such a one as at that day was not heard of, no, not among the Gentiles. Wherefore this was a desperate backsliding ; yet at his return, he was

received, and accepted again to mercy. 1 Cor. v. 1, 2; 2 Cor. ii. 6-8.

Fourthly. The thief that stole was bid to steal no more; not at all doubting, but that Christ was ready to forgive him this act of backsliding. Eph. iv. 28.

Now all these examples are particular instances of Christ's readiness to receive the backsliders to mercy; and, observe, examples and proofs that he hath done so, are, to our unbelieving hearts, stronger encouragements than bare promises that so he will do. But again, the Lord Jesus hath added to these, for the encouragement of returning backsliders, to come to him—

First. A call to come, and he will receive them; Rev. ii. 1-5, 14-16, 20-22; iii. 1-3, 18, 19. Wherefore, New Testament backsliders have encouragement to come.

Secondly. A declaration of readiness to receive them that come, as here in the text, and in many other places, is plain: therefore, "set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps; [of the golden grace of the gospel;] set thy heart toward the highway, even the way that thou wentest; [when thou didst backslide;] turn again, O virgin of Israel, turn again to these thy cities." Jer. xxxi. 21.

When the woman that had the bloody issue came to him for cure, there were others, as well as she, that made a great bustle about him, that touched, yea, thronged him. Ah, but Christ could distinguish this woman from them all. "And he looked round about upon them all, to

see her that had done this thing." Mark v. 25-34.

He was not concerned with the thronging or touching of the rest; for theirs were but accidental, or, at best, void of all that which made her touch acceptable. Wherefore Christ must be judge who they be that in truth are coming to him: every man's way is right in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits. It standeth therefore every one in hand to be certain of their coming to Jesus Christ; for as thy coming is, so shall thy salvation be. If thou comest indeed, thy salvation shall be indeed; but if thou comest but in outward appearance, so shall thy salvation be; but of coming, see before, as also afterwards, in the use and application.

And him that cometh *to me*.

These words, *to me*, are also to be well heeded; for by them, as he secureth those that are come to him, so also he shows himself unconcerned with those that, in their coming, rest short to turn aside to others. For you must know, that every one that comes, comes to Jesus Christ; some that come, come to the law, and there rest for life: with these Christ is not concerned: with these this promise hath not to do. "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace." Gal. v. 3, 4. Again, some that come, come no farther than the gospel ordinances, and there stay; they come not through them to Christ: with these neither is he con-

cerned ; nor will their “ Lord, Lord,” avail them any thing in the great and dismal day. A man may come to, and also from the place and ordinances of worship, and yet not be remembered by Christ. “ So I saw the wicked buried,” said Solomon, “ who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done ; this is also vanity.” Eccles. viii. 10.

To me. These words, therefore, are by Jesus Christ very wisely put in, and serve for caution and encouragement. For caution, lest we take up in our coming any thing short of Christ ; and for encouragement to those that shall, in their coming, come past all, till they come to Jesus Christ. “ And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out.

Reader, if thou lovest thy soul, take this caution kindly at the hands of Jesus Christ. Thou seest thy sickness, thy wound, thy necessity of salvation : “ Well, go not to king Jareb, for he cannot heal thee, nor cure thee of thy wound.” Hos. v. 13. Take the caution, I say, lest Christ, instead of being a Saviour unto thee, becomes a lion, a young lion to tear thee, and go away : ver. 14.

There is a coming, but not to the Most High : there is a coming, but not with the heart, but as it were feignedly : therefore take the caution kindly. Jer. xxx. 10 ; Hos. vii. 16.

And him that cometh *to me* : the man therefore that comes aright, casts all things behind his back, and looketh at, and hath his expectation from, the Son of God alone, as David said : “ My soul,

wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him ; he only is my rock, and my salvation : he is my defence ; I shall not be moved." Ps. lxii. 5, 6. His eye is to Christ, his heart is to Christ, and his expectation is from him, from him only. Therefore, the man that comes to Christ is one that hath deep consideration of his own sins, slighting thoughts of his own righteousness, and high thoughts of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ ; yea, he sees, as I have said, more virtue in the blood of Christ to save him, than there is in all his sins to damn him. He therefore setteth Christ before his eyes : there is nothing in heaven or earth, he knows, that can save his soul, and secure him from the wrath of God, but Christ ; and that is nothing but his personal righteousness and blood.

"And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." In nowise : by these words there is something expressed, and something implied. That which is expressed, is the unchangeable resolution of Christ Jesus to save the coming sinner ; I will in nowise reject him, or deny him the benefit of my death and righteousness. This word, therefore, is like that which he speaks of the everlasting damnation of the sinner : "He shall by no means depart thence ;" that is, never, never, never come out again : no, not to all eternity. Matt. v. 25 ; xxv. 46. So that, as he that is condemned to hell-fire hath no ground of hope for his deliverance thence ; so he that cometh to Christ, hath no ground to fear he shall ever be cast in thither.

"Thus saith the Lord ; If heaven above

can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord." Jer. xxxi. 37.

"Thus saith the Lord; If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob." Jer. xxxiii. 25, 26. But heaven cannot be measured, nor the foundations of the earth searched out beneath; his covenant is also with day and night, and he hath appointed the ordinances of heaven; therefore he will not cast away the seed of Jacob, who are the coming ones; but will certainly save them from the dreadful wrath to come. By this therefore it is manifest, that it was not the greatness of sin, nor the long continuance in it; no, nor yet the backsliding, nor the pollution of the nature, that can put a bar against, or be a hinderance of the salvation of the coming sinner: for, indeed, if this could be, then would this solemn and absolute determination of the Lord Jesus of itself fall to the ground, and be made of none effect. But his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure.

Suppose that one man had the sins, or as many sins as a hundred men; and another should have a hundred times as many as he; yet if they come, this word, "I will in nowise cast out," secures them both alike.

Suppose a man hath a desire to be saved, and for this purpose is coming in truth to Jesus Christ; but he, by his debauched life, has led many to hell; why, the door of hope is, by

these words, set as open for him as it is for him that hath not the thousandth part of his transgressions: "And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

Suppose a man is coming to Christ to be saved, and hath nothing but sin, and an ill-spent life, to bring with him. Why, let him "Come and welcome to Jesus Christ," and "he will in nowise cast him out." Luke vii. 41. Is not this love that passeth knowledge? Is not this love the wonderment of angels? And is not this love worthy of all acceptation at the hands and hearts of coming sinners?

Secondly. That which is implied in the words is,

First. The coming souls have those that continually lie at Jesus Christ to cast them off.

Secondly. The coming souls are afraid that those will prevail with Christ to cast them off.

For these words are spoken to satisfy us, and to stay up our spirits against these two dangers: "I will in nowise cast out."

First. For the coming souls have those that continually lie at Jesus Christ to cast them off.

And there are three things that thus set themselves against the coming sinner:

First. There is the devil, the accuser of the brethren, that accuses them before God, day and night. Rev. xii. 10. This prince of darkness is unwearied in this work; he doth it, as you see, day and night; that is, without ceasing. How did he strive against that good man Job, that, if possible, he might obtain his destruction in hell-fire! He objected against him, "that he served

not God for nought," and tempted God to put forth his hand against him; urging, "that if he did it, he would curse him to his face;" and all this, as God witnesseth, "he did without a cause." Job i. 9-11; ii. 3. How did he accuse Joshua the high-priest! "And he showed me Joshua," said the prophet, "the high-priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him." Zech. iii. 1. To resist him; to prevail with the Lord Jesus to resist him: objecting the uncleanness and unlawful marriage of his sons with the Gentiles; for that was the crime that Satan laid against them. Ezra x. 18. Yea, and for aught I know, Joshua was also guilty of the fact; but if not of that, of crimes no whit inferior; for he was clothed with filthy garments, as he stood before the angel. Neither had he one word to say in vindication of himself, against all that this wicked one had to say against him. But notwithstanding that, he came off well; but he might thank the Lord Jesus for it, because he did not resist him: but contrariwise, took up his cause, pleading against the devil, excusing his infirmity, and put justifying robes upon him before his adversary's face.

"And the Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" "And he answered and spake to those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I

will clothe thee with change of raiment." Zech. iii. 2, 4.

Again, what an enemy was he of Peter, when he desired to have him, that he might sift him as wheat! That is, if possible, to sever all grace from his heart, and leave him nothing but flesh and filth, to the end that he might make the Lord Jesus lothe and abhor him: "Simon, Simon," saith Christ, "Satan hath desired to have you, that he might sift you as wheat." But did he prevail against him? No: "but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." As if he should say, "Simon, Satan hath desired me that I would give thee up to him; and not only thee, but all the rest of thy brethren," (for that the word *you* imports;) "but I will not leave thee in his hand; I have prayed for thee, that thy faith shall not fail; I will secure to thee the heavenly inheritance." Luke xxii. 31, 32.

Secondly. As Satan, so *every sin*, of the coming sinner, comes in with a voice against him, if perhaps they may prevail with Christ to cast off the soul. When Israel was coming out of Egypt to Canaan, how many times had their sins thrown them out of the mercy of God, had not Moses, as a type of Christ, stood in the breach to turn away his wrath from them! Ps. cvi. 23. Our iniquities testify against us; and would certainly prevail against us, to our utter rejection and damnation, had we not an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. 1 John ii. 1, 2.

The sins of the old world carried them down to hell; the sins of Sodom brought upon them

fire from heaven, which devoured them; the sins of the Egyptians carried them down to hell, because they came not to Jesus Christ for life. Coming sinner, thy sins may not be less than theirs; nay, perhaps they are as great as all theirs. Why is it then that thou livest when they are dead, and that thou hast a promise of pardon when they had not? Why, thou art coming to Jesus Christ, and therefore sin shall not be thy ruin.

Thirdly. As Satan and sin, so the law of Moses, as it is a perfect and holy law, hath a voice against you before the face of God. There is one that accuses you, even Moses' law. John v. 45. Yea, it accuses all men of transgression that have sinned against it; for as long as sin is sin, there will be a law to accuse sin. But this accusation shall not prevail against the coming sinner, because it is Christ that died, and that ever lives, to make intercession for them that come unto God by him. Rom. viii; Heb. vii. 25.

These things, I say, do accuse us before Christ Jesus; yea, and to all our own faces; if perhaps they might prevail against us. But these words, "I will in nowise cast out," secureth the coming sinner from them all.

The coming sinner is saved, not because there are none that come in against him; but because the Lord Jesus will not hear their accusations; will not cast him out.

When Shimei came down to meet king David, and to ask pardon for his rebellion, up starts Abishai, and puts in his accusation, saying, "Shall not Shimei die for this?" This is the

case of him that comes to Christ. He hath this Abishai, and that Abishai, that presently steps in against him, saying, Shall not this rebel's sin destroy him in hell? Read farther: But David answered, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah, that ye should this day be adversaries unto me? Shall there any man be put to death this day in Israel? for do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?" 2 Sam. xix. 16-22.

This is Christ's answer by the text, to all that accuse the coming Shimeis: What have I to do with you that accuse the coming sinners to me? I count you adversaries, that are against showing mercy to them. Do not I know, that I am exalted this day to be king of righteousness, and king of peace? I will in nowise cast them out.

Secondly. But again, these words do closely imply, that the coming souls are afraid that these accusers will prevail against them, as is evident, because the text is spoken for their relief and succor; for that need not be, if they that are coming were not subject to fear and despondency upon this account. Alas! there is a guilt, and the curse lies upon the conscience of the coming sinner.

Now, we have yet to inquire into two things that lie in the words, upon which there hath been nothing said: as,

1. What it is to cast out.

2. How it appears that Christ hath power to save or cast out.

For the first of these, what it is to cast out. Of this I will speak—

1. Generally.—2. More particularly.

First. Generally, to cast out, is to slight, and despise, and condemn; as it is said of Saul's shield, it was vilely cast away; that is, slightly, and contemned. Thus it is with the sinners that come not to Jesus Christ:—He slights, despises, and contemns them; that is, casts them away.

Secondly. Things cast away, are reputed as the dirt of the street. Ps. xviii. 42; Matt. v. 13. And thus it shall be with the men that come not to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly. To be cast out, or off, is to be abhorred, not pitied; but to be put to a perpetual shame. Ps. xlv. 9; Amos i. 11.

But more particularly, to come to the text. The casting out here mentioned, is not limited to this or the other evil: therefore it must be extended to the most extreme misery.—Or thus:

He that cometh to Christ, shall not want any thing that may make him gospelly happy in this world, or that which is to come; nor shall he that cometh not, want any thing, that may make him spiritually and eternally miserable.

But farther, as it is to be generally taken, so it respects things that shall be hereafter.

For the things that are now, are either,

1. General, or 2. Particular.

First. General. Thus:—It is to be cast out of the presence and favor of God.

Thus was Cain cast out. 'Thou hast driven or cast me out this day; from thy face (that is, from thy favor) shall I be hid. A dreadful complaint! but the effect of a more dreadful judgment! Gen. iv. 13, 14; Jer. xxiii. 39; 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

Secondly. To be cast out, is to be cast out of God's sight. God will look after them no more, care for them no more; nor will he watch over them any more for good. 2 Kings xvii. 20; Jer. vii. 15. Now they that are so, are left, like blind men, to wander and fall into the pit of hell. This, therefore, is also a sad judgment! Therefore, here is the mercy to him that cometh to Christ; he shall not be left to wander in uncertainties. The Lord Jesus Christ will keep him as a shepherd doth his sheep. Ps. xxiii. "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

Thirdly. To be cast out, is to be denied a place in God's house, and to be left as fugitives and vagabonds, to pass a little time away in this miserable life, and after that to go down to the dead. Gal. iv. 30; Gen. iv. 13, 14; xxi. 10. Therefore, this is the benefit to him that cometh to Christ; he shall not be denied a place in God's house. They shall not be left like vagabonds in the world: "Him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." See Prov. xiv. 26; Isa. lvi. 3-5; Eph. ii. 19-22; 1 Cor. iii. 21-23.

Fourthly. In a word, *to be cast out*, is to be rejected, as are the fallen angels: for their eternal damnation began at their being cast down from heaven to hell. So then, *not to be cast out*, is to have a place, a house and habitation there; and to have a share in the privileges of elect angels.

These words, therefore, *I will not cast out*, will prove great words one day, to them that come to Jesus Christ. Luke xx. 35.

Secondly, and more particularly:—

First. Christ hath everlasting life for him that cometh to him, and he shall never perish; for he will in nowise cast him out: but for the rest, they are rejected, cast out, and must be damned. John x. 27, 28.

Secondly. Christ hath everlasting righteousness, to clothe them with that come to him, and they shall be covered with it as with a garment, but the rest shall be found in the filthy rags of their own pollutions, and shall be wrapped up in them, as in a winding-sheet, and so bear their shame before the Lord, and also before the angels. Isa. lvii. 2; Rev. iii. 4.

Thirdly. Christ hath precious blood, that, like an open fountain, stands free for him to wash in, that comes to him for life: "And he will in nowise cast him out." But they that come not to him are rejected from a share therein, and are left to direful vengeance for their sins. Zech. xiii. 1; 1 Pet. xviii. 19; John xiii. 8; iii. 36.

Fourthly. Christ hath precious promises, and they shall have a share in them, that come to him for life: "For he will in nowise cast them out." But they that come not, can have no share in them, because they are true only in him. For in him, and only in him, all the promises are yea, and amen. Wherefore, they that come not to him, are not the better for them. Ps. l. 16; 2 Cor. i. 20, 21.

Fifthly. Christ hath also fullness of grace in himself for them that come to him for life, and "He will in nowise cast them out." But those that come not unto him, are left in their graceless state; and as Christ leaves them, death, hell, and

judgment find them. "Whoso findeth me," saith Christ, "findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord: But he that sinneth against me, wringeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death." Prov. viii. 35, 36.

Sixthly. Christ is an intercessor, and ever liveth to make intercession for them that come to God by him. But their sorrows shall be multiplied, that hasten after another (or other) gods, (their sins and lusts :) their drink-offerings he will not offer, nor take up their names into his lips. Ps. xvi. 4; Heb. vii. 25.

Seventhly. Christ hath wonderful love, power, and compassion, for those that come to him; for, "He will in nowise cast them out." But the rest will find him a lion rampant: he will one day tear them in pieces: "Now consider this," saith he, "ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you." Ps. i. 22.

Eighthly. Christ is known by those that come to him, and for his sake they have their persons and performances accepted of the Father: "And he will in nowise cast them out." But the rest must fly to the rocks and mountains for shelter, but all in vain, to hide them from his face and wrath. Rev. vi. 15-17.

But again, these words, *cast out*, have a special reference to what will be hereafter, even at the day of judgment; for then, and not till then, will be the great *anathema*, and casting out, made manifest, even manifest by execution. Therefore, here let me speak of this, and that under these two heads:

1. Of casting out itself.

2. Of the place into which they shall be cast, who shall then be cast out.

First. The casting out itself consists of two things :

1. A preparatory work.

2. The manner of executing the act.

The *preparatory* work consists of three things :

First. The separation of those, that have not come to him, from them that have, in that day. Or thus ; at the day of the great cast out, those that have not (now) come to him, shall be separated from them that have ; for them that have, " he will not cast out." " When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory : and before him shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." Matt. xxv. 31, 32.

This dreadful separation, therefore, shall then be made between them that (now) come to Christ, and them that come not ; and good reason : for since they would not with us come to him, now they have time ; why should they stand with us, when judgment is come ?

Secondly. They shall be placed before him according to their condition ; they that have come to him, in great dignity, " for he will in nowise cast them out : " but the rest shall be set at his left hand, (the place of disgrace and shame,) for they did not come to him for life.

Distinguished also shall they be by fit terms ;

those that come to him, he calleth sheep, but the rest are goats. "And he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats; and the sheep will he set on his right hand, (next heaven gate, for they came to him,) but the goats on the left, to go from him into hell, because they are not of his sheep."

Thirdly. Then will Christ proceed to the conviction of those that came not unto him, and will say, "I was a stranger, and ye took me not in," or did not come unto me. Their excuse of themselves he will utterly slight, and then will come to their final judgment. Now when these wretched rejecters of Christ shall be thus set before him in their sins, and convicted, which is the preparatory work, then will follow the manner of executing the act; which will be done—

First. In the presence of all the holy angels.

Secondly. In the presence of all them that in their lifetime came to him, by saying unto them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels," with the reason annexed to it. For you were cruel to me and mine, particularly discovered in these words: "For I was a hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." Matt. xxv. 41-43.

Lastly. Now it remains that we speak of the place into which these shall be cast, which, in

the general, you have heard already, viz. the fire prepared for the devil and his angels ; but, in particular, it is thus described :

First. It is called Tophet : for “Tophet is ordained of old ; yea, for the king (the Lucifer) it is prepared ; he hath made it deep and large : the pile thereof is fire and much wood ; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it.” Isa. xxx. 33.

Secondly. It is called hell. “It is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet, to be cast into hell.” Mark ix. 45.

Thirdly. It is called the wine-press of the wrath of God : “And the angel thrust in his sickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, (that is, them that did not come to Christ,) and cast it into the great wine-press of the wrath of God.” Rev. xiv. 19.

Fourthly. It is called a lake of fire : “And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire.” Rev. xx. 15.

Fifthly. It is called a pit : “Thou hast said in thy heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God : I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.” Isa. xiv. 13, 15.

Sixthly. It is called a bottomless pit, out of which the smoke and the locusts came, and into which the great dragon was cast ; and it is called bottomless, to show the endlessness or the fall that they will have in it, who come not

in the acceptable time to Jesus Christ. Rev. ix. 1, 2; xx. 3.

Seventhly. It is called outer darkness: "Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into outer darkness;"—"and cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xxii. 13; xxv. 30.

Eighthly. It is called a furnace of fire: "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." And again, "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matt. xiii. 40-42, 48-50.

Lastly. It may not be amiss, if, in the conclusion of this, I show you, in few words, to what the things that torment them in this state are compared. Indeed, some of them have been occasionally mentioned already; as that they are compared—

First. To wood that burneth.

Secondly. To fire.

Thirdly. To fire and brimstone: but,

Fourthly. It is compared to a worm, a gnawing worm, a never-dying gnawing worm: They are cast into hell, "where their worm dieth not." Mark ix. 44.

Fifthly. It is called an unquenchable fire:

“He will gather his wheat into the garner ; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Matt. iii. 12 ; Luke iii. 17.

Sixthly. It is called everlasting destruction : “ The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.” 2 Thess. i. 7-9.

Seventhly. It is called wrath without mixture, and is given them in the cup of his indignation : “ If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation ; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb.” Rev. xiv. 9, 10.

Eighthly. It is called the second death : “ And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.” “ Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection : on such the second death hath no power.” Rev. xx. 6, 14.

Ninthly. It is called eternal damnation : “ But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.” Mark iii. 29.

O ! these three words !—
Everlasting punishment !
Eternal damnation !

And for ever and ever !

How will they destroy all expectation of the end of the misery of the cast away sinners ! “ And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night.” Rev. xiv. 11.

Their misery in hell is set forth by four things :—

1. By calling for help and relief in vain.
2. By weeping.
3. By wailing.
4. By *gnashing of teeth*.

And now we come to the second thing that is to be inquired into ; namely,

How it appears that Christ hath power to save, or to cast out : For by these words, *I will in nowise cast out*, he declareth that he hath power to do both.

Now this inquiry leads us to search into two things :

1. How it appears that he hath power to save.

2. How it appears that he hath power to cast out.

That he hath power to save, appears from that which follows :

First. To speak only of him as he is mediator ; he was authorized to perform this blessed work by his Father, before the world began. Hence the apostle saith, “ He hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world,” with all those things that effectually will produce our salvation. Ephes. i. 4 ; 2 Tim. i. 9.

Secondly. He was promised to our first parents, that he should in the fullness of time bruise the serpent's head ; and, as Paul expresses it, "redeem them that were under the law." Hence, since that time, he hath been reckoned as slain for our sins ; by which he means all the Fathers under the first Testament were secured from the wrath to come." Hence he is called, "The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Rev. xiii. 8 ; Gen. iii. 15 ; Gal. iv. 4, 5.

Thirdly. Moses gave testimony of him by the types and shadows, and bloody sacrifices, that he commanded, from the mouth of God, to be in use to the support of his people's faith, until the time of reformation ; which was the time of Christ's death. Heb. chap. ix. and x.

Fourthly. At the time of his birth it was testified of him by the angel, "He shall save his people from their sins." Matt. i. 21.

Fifthly. He said of himself, in the days of his flesh, "The Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." Mark ii. 10.

Sixthly. It is testified also of him by the apostle Peter, that "Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts v. 31.

Seventhly. In a word, this is every where testified of him, both in the Old Testament and the New.

And good reason that he should be acknowledged and trusted in as a Saviour.

1. He came down from heaven to be a Saviour. John vi. 38-40.

2. He was anointed when on earth to be a Saviour. Luke iii. 22.

3. He did the works of a Saviour : as,

First. He fulfilled the law, and became the end of it for righteousness, to them that believe in him. Rom. x. 3, 4.

Secondly. He laid down his life as a Saviour ; he gave his life "a ransom for many." Matt. xx. 28 ; Mark x. 45 ; 1 Tim. ii. 6.

Thirdly. He has abolished death, destroyed the devil, put away sin, got the keys of hell and death, is ascended into heaven ; is there accepted of God, and sits at his right hand as a Saviour ; and that because his sacrifice for sins pleased God. 2 Tim. i. 10 ; Heb. ii. 14, 15 ; Eph. iv. 7, 8 ; John xvi. 10, 11 ; Acts v. 30, 31 ; Heb. x. 12, 13.

Fourthly. God hath sent out, and proclaimed him as a Saviour, and tells the world that we have redemption through his blood ; that he will justify us, if we believe in his blood, and that he can faithfully and justly do it. Yea, God doth beseech us to be reconciled to him by his Son ; which could not be, if he were not anointed by him to this very end, and also if his works and undertakings were not accepted of him as those of a Saviour. Rom. iii. 24, 25 ; 2 Cor. v. 18-21.

Fifthly. God has already received millions of souls into his paradise, because they have received this Jesus for a Saviour ; and is resolved to cut those off, and to cast them out of his presence, who will not take him for a Saviour. Heb. xii. 22-26.

Secondly. How it appears that he hath power to cast out.

First. The Father (for the service that he hath done him as a Saviour) hath made him Lord of all, even Lord of quick and dead. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living." Rom. xiv. 9.

Secondly. The Father hath left it with him to quicken whom he will, to wit, with saving grace, and to cast out whom he will, for their rebellion against him. John v. 21.

Thirdly. The Father hath made him judge of quick and dead, and hath committed all judgment unto the Son, and appointed that all should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. John v. 23.

Fourthly. God will judge the world by this man; the day is appointed for judgment, and he is appointed for judge. "He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained." Acts xvii. 31.

Therefore we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive for the things done in the body, according to what they have done. If they have received Christ, heaven and salvation: if not, hell and damnation.

And for these reasons he must be judge:

First. Because of his humiliation; because of his Father's word he "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God hath highly exalted him,

and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow; of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

This has respect to his being judge, and his sitting in judgment upon angels and men. Phil. ii. 7-11.

Secondly. That all men might honor the Son, even as they honor the Father: "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." John v. 22, 23.

Thirdly. Because of his righteous judgment, this work is fit for no creature; it is only fit for the Son of God. For he will reward "every man according as his work shall be." Rev. xxii. 12.

Fourthly. Because he is the Son of man. He "hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." John v. 27.

Thus have I briefly passed through this text, by way of explication: my next work is to speak of it by way of observation. But I shall be also as brief in that as the nature of the thing will admit.

"All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me; and him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." John vi. 37.

And I now come to some observations, and then conclude the whole.

The words thus explained, suggest many thoughts; some of which are these:—

First. That God the Father, and Christ his Son, are two distinct persons in the Godhead.

Secondly. That by them (not excluding the Holy Ghost) is contrived and determined the salvation of fallen mankind.

Thirdly. That this contrivance resolved itself into a covenant between these three persons in the Godhead, which consists of giving on the Father's part, and receiving on the Son's : "All that the Father giveth me," &c.

Fourthly. That every one that the Father hath given to Christ (according to the mind of God in the text) shall certainly come to him.

Fifthly. That coming to Jesus Christ is therefore not by the will, wisdom, or power of man ; but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father : "All that the Father giveth to me, shall come."

Sixthly. That Jesus Christ will be careful to receive, and will not in anywise reject those that come, or are coming to him : "And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

There are, besides these, some other truths implied in the words : as—

Seventhly. They that are coming to Jesus Christ, are often really afraid that he will not receive them.

Eighthly. Jesus Christ would not have them, that in truth are coming to him, once think that he will cast them out.

These observations lie all of them in the words, and are abundantly confirmed by the Scriptures of truth ; but I shall not at this time speak of them all, but shall pass by the first,

second, third, fourth, and sixth, partly because I designed brevity, and partly because they are touched upon in the explicatory part of the text. I shall therefore begin with the *fifth observation*, and so make that the first in order, in the following discourse.

First, then, coming to Christ is not by the will, wisdom, or power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father. This observation embraces two parts :

First. That coming to Christ is not by the will, wisdom, or power of man.

Secondly. But by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father.

That the text carrieth this truth in its bosom, you will find, if you look into the explication of the first part thereof before. I shall therefore here follow the method propounded, viz. show—

First. That coming to Christ is not by the will, wisdom, or power of man. This is true, because the word doth positively say, it is not.

First. It denieth it to be by the will of man : “Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man.” And again, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth.” John i. 13; Rom. ix. 16.

Secondly. It denieth it to be by the wisdom of man, as is manifest from these considerations :

First. In the wisdom of God it pleased him, that the world by wisdom should not know him. Now, if by their wisdom they cannot know him, it follows, by that wisdom they cannot come unto him ; for coming to him, is not before, but

after some knowledge of him. 1. Cor. 1. 21 ; Acts xii. 11 ; Ps. ix. 10.

Secondly. The wisdom of man, in God's account, as to the knowledge of Christ, is reckoned foolishness. Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world ? And again, the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God.

If God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world ; and again, if the wisdom of this world is foolishness with him ; then, verily, it is not likely that by that wisdom a sinner should become so prudent, as to come to Jesus Christ ; especially if you consider—

Thirdly. That the doctrine of a crucified Christ, and so of salvation by him, is the very thing that is counted foolishness by the wisdom of the world. Now, if the very doctrine of a crucified Christ be counted foolishness by the wisdom of this world, it cannot be, that by that wisdom a man should be drawn out, in his soul, to come to him. 1 Cor. i. 20 ; ii. 14 ; iii. 19 ; i. 18, 23.

Fourthly. God counteth the wisdom of this world one of his greatest enemies : therefore by that wisdom no man can come to Jesus Christ. For it is not likely that one of God's greatest enemies should draw a man to that which best of all pleases God, as coming to Christ does. Now, that God counteth the wisdom of this world one of his greatest enemies, is evident—

First. Because it casts the greatest contempt upon his Son's undertaking, as is proved, in that it counts his crucifixion foolishness : though that

is one of the highest demonstrations of Divine wisdom. Eph. i. 7, 8.

Secondly. Because God hath threatened to destroy it, and bring it to nought, and cause it to perish; which surely he would not do, were it not an enemy, and if it would direct men to, and cause them to close with Jesus Christ. See Isa. xxix. 14; 1 Cor. i. 19.

Thirdly. He hath rejected it from helping in the ministry of his word, as a fruitless business, and a thing that comes to nought. 1 Cor. ii. 4, 6, 12, 13.

Fourthly. Because it causeth to perish those that feel it, and pursue it. 1 Cor. i. 18, 19.

Fifthly. And God has proclaimed, that if any man will be wise in this world, he must be a fool in the wisdom of this world, and that is the way to be wise in the wisdom of God. "If any man seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God." 2 Cor. ii. 18, 19.

Coming to Christ is not by the power of man. This is evident, partly—

First. From what has already been stated; for man's power in the putting forth of it in this matter, is either stirred up by love, or sense of necessity; but the wisdom of this world neither gives man love to Jesus Christ, nor a sense of the need of him: therefore his power lieth still, as from that.

Secondly. What power has he that is dead, (as every natural man is,) even spiritually dead in trespasses and sins; dead, even as dead to

God's New Testament things, as he that is in his grave, is dead to the things of this world? What power has he then, whereby to come to Jesus Christ? John v. 25; Eph. ii. 1-5.

Thirdly. God forbids the mighty man to glory in his strength, and says positively, "by strength shall no man prevail;" and again, "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord." Jer. ix. 23; 1 Sam. ii. 9; Zech. iv. 6.

Fourthly. Paul acknowledges that man, nay, converted man, of himself, has not a sufficiency of power in himself to think a good thought. If, then, he is not able to do that which is least, (for to think is less than to come,) then no man by his own power can come to Jesus Christ. 2 Cor. iii. 5.

Fifthly. Hence we are said to be made willing to come, by the power of God; to be raised from a state of sin, to a state of grace, by the power of God; and to believe, that is, to come, through the exceeding working of his mighty power. Ps. cx. 3; Col. ii. 12; Eph. i. 18-20.

But this would not be the case, if men had either the power or the will to come; or so much as graciously to think of being willing to come of themselves to Jesus Christ.

I should now come to the proofs of the second part of the observation, but that is occasionally done already, in the explicatory part of the text; to which I refer the reader: for I shall here only give a text or two more to the same purpose, and so come to the use and application.

First. It is expressly said, "No man shall

come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." By this text, it is not only intimated, that in man there is want of power, but also of will, to come to Jesus Christ: he must be drawn: he comes not if he be not drawn: and observe, it is not man, no, nor all the angels in heaven, that can draw one sinner to Jesus Christ. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me, draw him." John vi. 44.

Secondly. Again, "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." John vi. 65. It is a heavenly gift that induces man to come to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly. Again, "It is written in the prophets, They shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." John vi. 45.

I shall not enlarge, but shall make some use and application.

First. Is it so? Is coming to Jesus Christ, not by the will, wisdom, or power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then they are to blame that cry up the will, wisdom, and power of man, as things sufficient to bring men to Christ.

There are some men who think they may not be contradicted, when they plead for the will, wisdom, and power of man, in reference to the things that are of the kingdom of Christ. But I will say to such a man, he has never yet understood his own character, and what the Scripture teaches concerning him: neither did he ever know what coming to Christ is, by the teaching, gift, and drawing of the Father. He is one that

hath set up God's enemy in opposition to him, and that continues in such acts of defiance : and what his end, without a new birth, will be, the Scripture teaches also. But we will pass this.

Secondly. Is it so? Is coming to Jesus Christ, by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then let saints here learn to ascribe their coming to Christ, to the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father. Christian man, bless God, who hath given thee to Jesus Christ, by promise; and again, bless God, that he has drawn thee to him. And why is it thee? Why not another? Oh! that the glory of electing love should rest upon thy head, and that the glory of the exceeding grace of God should take hold of thy heart and bring thee to Jesus Christ!

Thirdly. Is it so, that coming to Christ is by the Father, as aforesaid? Then this should teach us to set a high esteem upon them that are indeed coming to Jesus Christ; I say, a high esteem on them, for the sake of him, by virtue of whose grace they are made to come to Jesus Christ.

We see, that when men, by the help of human abilities, do arrive at the knowledge of, and bring to pass that which, when done, is a wonder to the world, how he that did it is esteemed and commended. Yea, how his parts, industry, and unweariedness are admired; and yet the man, as to this, is but of the world, and his work the effect of natural ability. The things also attained by him, end in vanity and vexation of spirit. Further: perhaps in the pursuit of these his achievements, he sins against God, wastes

his time vainly, and, at last, loses his soul by neglecting it. Yet he is admired ! But I say, if this man's parts, labor, diligence, and the like, will bring him to such applause and esteem in the world ; what esteem should we have of such a one who is by the gift, promise, and power of God, coming to Jesus Christ ?

First. This is a man with whom God is, in whom God works, and walks ; a man who is led by the mighty hand of God, and the effectual working of his power. Here is a man !

Secondly. This man, by the power of God's might, which works in him, is able to cast a whole world behind him, with all the lusts and pleasures of it : and to press through all the difficulties that men and devils can set against him. Here is a man !

Thirdly. This man is travelling to mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, and to an innumerable company of angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, to God the judge of all, and to Jesus.

Fourthly. This man can look upon death with comfort ; can laugh at destruction when it cometh ; and long to hear the sound of the last trump, and to see the Judge coming in the clouds of heaven. Here is a man indeed !

Let Christians then esteem each other : I know you do this ; but do it more. And that you may, consider these two or three things.

First. Christians are the objects of Christ's esteem. Matt. xii. 49 ; xv. 22-28 : Luke vii. 9.

Secondly. These are the objects of the esteem of angels. Dan. x. 11 ; Heb. i. 14.

Thirdly. These have been the objects of the esteem of heathens, when but convinced about them. Dan. v. 11 ; Acts v. 15 ; 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

Let each of you then esteem each other better than themselves. Phil. ii. 3.

Fourthly. Again, is it so, that no man comes to Jesus Christ by the will, wisdom, and power of man ; but by the gift, power, and drawing of the Father ? Then this shows us how horribly ignorant of this such are, who make the man that is coming to Christ the object of their contempt and rage. These are also unreasonable and wicked men, men in whom is no faith.

But, faithless sinner, let us expostulate a little with you in this matter. What hath this man done against thee, who is coming to Jesus Christ ? Why dost thou make him the object of thy scorn ? Doth his coming to Jesus Christ offend thee ? Doth his pursuing of his own salvation offend thee ? Doth his forsaking of his sins and pleasures offend thee ?

Poor coming man ! Thou sacrificest the abominations of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone thee ? Exod. viii. 26.

But I say, why offended at this ? Is he ever the worse for coming to Jesus Christ, or for his loving and serving of Jesus Christ ? or is he ever the more a fool, for flying from that which will cause thee to perish for ever, and for seek-

ing eternal life? Besides, pray consider, this he does not of himself, but by the drawing of the Father. Come, let me tell thee in thine ear, thou that wilt not come to him thyself, and him that would, thou hinderest:

First. Thou shalt be judged for one that hath hated, maligned, and reproached Jesus Christ, to whom this poor sinner was coming.

Secondly. Thou shalt be judged too, for one that hath hated the Father, by whose powerful drawing the sinner doth come.

Fourthly. Thou shalt be taken, and judged for one that has done despite to the Spirit of grace in him; for by his help, he was coming to Jesus Christ. What sayest thou now? Wilt thou stand by thy doings? Wilt thou continue to condemn and reproach the living God? Thinkest thou that thou shalt stand in the day of judgment? "Can thy heart endure, or can thy hands be strong, in the days that I shall deal with thee, saith the Lord? "John xv. 18-26; Jude 14, 15; 1 Thes. iv. 8; Ezek. xxii. 14.

Fifthly. Is it so, that no man comes to Jesus Christ by the will, wisdom, and power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father? Then this shows us, how it comes to pass, that weak means are so powerful as to bring men from their sins, to a hearty pursuit after Jesus Christ. When God bade Moses speak to the people, he said, I will speak with thee. Exod. xix. 9. When God speaks, when God works, who can let it? None, none. Then the work goes on. Elias threw his mantle upon the shoulders of Elisha; and what a wonderful work then

followed ! When Jesus spake at the crowing of a cock, what work was there ! O when God is in the means, (be it ever so weak and contemptible in itself,) he works wonders. 1 Kings xix. 19 ; Matt. xxvi. 74, 75 ; Mark xiv. 71, 72 ; Luke xxii. 60-62.

The world understand not, nor believe that the walls of Jericho shall fall at the sound of rams' horns ; but when God will work, the means must be effectual. A word weakly spoken, spoken with difficulty, in temptation, and in the midst of great contempt and scorn, works wonders, if the Lord thy God accompanies it with his Spirit.

Sixthly. Is it so ? Doth no man come to Jesus Christ by the will, wisdom, and power of man, but by the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father ? Then here is room for Christians to wonder at the effectual workings of God's providences, that he makes use of as means to bring them to Jesus Christ.

For although men are drawn to Christ by the power of the Father ; yet that power puts forth itself in the use of means ; and those means are diverse ; sometimes this, sometimes that ; for God is at liberty to work by which, and when, and how he will ; and as contemptible as they may be, yet God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, and that out of weakness can make strong, can, nay, doth oftentimes make use of very unlikely means to bring about the conversion and salvation of his people. Therefore, you that are come to Christ, (and that by unlikely means,) stay yourselves and wonder ;

and, wondering, magnify Almighty power, in making the means effectual that brought you to Jesus Christ.

What was the providence that God made use of as a means, either more remote, or more near, to bring thee to Jesus Christ? Was it the removing of thy habitation, the change of thy condition, the loss of relations, estate, or the like? Was it the casting of thine eye upon some good book, hearing thy neighbors talk of heavenly things, the beholding of God's judgments as executed upon others, or thine own deliverance from them; or thy being strangely cast under the ministry of some godly man? Oh, take notice of such providence or providences! They were sent and managed by mighty power to do thee good. God himself, I say, hath joined himself to this chariot; yea, and so blessed it, that it failed not to accomplish the things for which he sent it.

God blesses not to every one his providences in this manner. How many thousands are there in this world, that pass every day under the same providences? But God is not in them, to do that work by them, as he has done for thy poor soul, by his effectual working with them. O! that Jesus Christ should meet thee in this providence, that dispensation, or the other ordinances! 'This is grace indeed! At this, therefore, it will be thy wisdom to admire, and for this to bless God.

Give me leave to give you a taste of some of those providences that have been effectual, through the management of God, to bring salvation to the souls of his people.

First. The first shall be that of the woman of Samaria. It must happen, that she must needs go out of the city to draw water, not before or after, but just when Jesus Christ her Saviour was come from far, and set to rest him, being weary, upon the well. What a blessed providence was this! even a providence managed by Almighty wisdom, and Almighty power, to the conversion and salvation of this poor creature; for by this providence was this poor creature and her Saviour brought together; that that blessed work might be fulfilled upon the woman, according to the purpose before determined by the Father. John iv. 6-29.

Secondly. What a providence was it, that there should be a tree in the way for Zaccheus to climb, thereby to give Jesus opportunity to call that chief of the publicans home to himself, even before he came down therefrom! Luke xix. 2-10.

Thirdly. Was it not also wonderful, that the thief, whom you read of in the gospel, should, by the providence of God, be cast into prison, to be condemned, even at that sessions that Christ himself was to die; nay, and that it should happen too, that they must be hanged together, that the thief might be in hearing and observing of Jesus in his last words, that he might be converted by him before his death? Luke xxiii. 39-43.

Fourthly. What a strange providence it was, and as strangely managed by God, that Onesimus, when he was run away from his master, should be taken, and, as I think, cast into that

very prison, where *Paul* lay bound for the word of the gospel, that he might there be by him converted, and sent home again to his master *Philemon* ! Behold, all things work together for good to them that love God ; to them who are the called according to his purpose. Rom. viii. 28.

Nay, I myself have known some that have been made to go to hear the word preached against their wills ; others have gone, not to hear, but to see and to be seen ; nay, and to jeer and ridicule others ; as also to cavil at things. Some also to feed their adulterous eyes with the sight of beautiful objects ; and yet God hath made use of even these things, and even of the wicked and sinful proposals of sinners, to bring them under the grace that might save their souls.

Seventhly. Doth no man come to Jesus Christ, but by the drawing of the Father ? Then let me here caution those poor sinners, that are spectators of the change that God hath wrought upon them that are coming to Jesus Christ, not to attribute this work and change to other things and causes.

There are some poor sinners in the world that plainly see a change, a mighty change in their neighbors and relations that are coming to Jesus Christ ; but, as I said, they being ignorant, and not knowing whence it comes, and whither it goes, (for so is every one that is born of the Spirit, John iii. 8,) therefore they attribute this change to other causes : as,

1. To melancholy.
2. To sitting alone.
3. To over-much reading.

4. To their hearing too many sermons.

5. To too much studying and musing on what they hear.

And they conclude on the other side,

First. That it is for want of merry company.

Secondly. For want of medicine, and therefore they advise them to leave off reading, going to hear sermons, the company of sober people, and to be merry, to gossip, to busy themselves in the things of this world, and not to sit musing alone.

But come, poor ignorant sinner, let me deal with thee:—it seems thou art turned counsellor for Satan. I tell thee, thou knowest not what thou doest. Take heed of spending thy judgment after this manner: thou judgest foolishly, and sayest, in this, to every one that passeth by, thou art a fool.

What! count convictions for sin, mourning for sin, and repentance for sin, melancholy! This is like those, that on the other side said, 'These men are drunk with new wine, &c. Or as he that said Paul was mad. Acts ii. 13; xxvi. 24.

Poor ignorant sinner, canst thou judge no better? What! Is sitting alone, pensive under God's hand, reading the Scriptures, and hearing of sermons, &c, the way to be undone? The Lord open thine eyes, and make thee to see thine error. Thou hast set thyself against God; thou hast despised the operations of his hand; thou hast attempted to murder souls. What! Canst thou give no better counsel, touching those whom God hath wounded, than to send them to the or-

dinances of hell for help? Thou biddest them be merry; but dost thou not know that the heart of fools is in the house of laughter? Eccles. vii. 4.

4. Thou biddest them shun the hearing of awakening preachers; but is it not better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools? Eccles. vii. 5. Thou biddest them busy themselves in the things of this world; but dost thou not know that the Lord bids, first seek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof? Matt. vi. 33.

Poor ignorant sinner, hear the counsel of God to such, and learn, thyself, to be wiser. Is any afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? Let him sing psalms. Blessed is he that heareth me; and hear for time to come. Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Search the Scriptures, give attendance to reading. It is better to go to the house of mourning. James v. 13; Prov. viii. 34; Acts ii. 40; John v. 39; 1 Tim. iv. 13; Eccl. vii. 2.

And wilt thou judge him that doth thus? Art thou almost like Elymas the sorcerer, that sought to turn the deputy from the faith? Thou seekest to pervert the right ways of the Lord; take heed, lest some heavy judgment overtake thee. Acts xiii. 8-11.

What! Teach men to quench convictions; take men off from a serious consideration of the evil of sin, of the terrors of the world to come, and how they shall escape the same! What! Teach men to put God and his word out of their minds, by running to merry company, by run-

ning to the world, by gossiping, &c. This is as much as to bid them say to God, Depart from us, for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; or, What is the Almighty that we should serve him? or, What profit have we, if we should keep his ways? What! Bid men walk according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience! Eph. ii. 2.

Object. But we do not know that such are coming to Jesus Christ; truly we wonder at them, and think they are fools.

Answer. First. Do you not know that they are coming to Jesus Christ? Then they may be coming to him, for aught you know; and why will you be worse than the brute, to speak evil of the things you know not? What! Are ye made to be taken and destroyed? Must ye utterly perish in your own corruptions? 2 Pet. ii. 12.

Secondly. Do you not know them? Let them alone then. If you cannot speak good of them, speak not bad. "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." Acts v. 38, 39.

Thirdly. But why do you wonder at a work of conviction and conversion? Know you not that this is the judgment of God upon you, ye despisers, to behold, and wonder, and perish? Acts iii. 41.

Fourthly. But why wonder and think ye are

fools? Is the way of the just an abomination to you? See that passage and be ashamed: "He that is upright in the way, is an abomination to the wicked." Prov. xxix. 27.

Fifthly. Your wondering at them, argues that you are strangers to yourselves, to conviction for sin, and to hearty desires to be saved; as also to coming to Jesus Christ.

Object. But how shall we know that such men are coming to Jesus Christ?

Answer. Who can make them see, that Christ has made blind? John ix. 2, 3. Nevertheless, because I endeavored by conviction, conversion, and salvation, consider,

1. Do they cry out of sin, being burdened with it, as an exceeding bitter thing?

2. Do they fly from it, as from the face of a deadly serpent?

3. Do they cry out of the insufficiency of their own righteousness, as to justification in the sight of God?

4. Do they cry out after the Lord Jesus to save them?

5. Do they see more worth and merit in Christ's blood to save them, than in all the sins of the world to condemn them?

6. Are they tender of sinning against Jesus Christ?

7. Are the name, person, and undertakings of Christ, more precious to them, than the glory of the world?

8. Is the world not dear unto them?

9. Is faith in Christ (which they are convinced by God's Spirit of the want of, and that

without it they can never close with Christ) precious to them?

10. Do they favor Christ in his word, and do they leave all the world for his sake? And are they willing (God helping them) to run hazards for his name, for the love they bear to him?

11. Are his saints precious to them?

If these things be so, whether thou seest them or not, these men are coming to Jesus Christ. Rom. vii. 9-14; Ps. xxxviii. 3-8; Heb. vi. 18-20; Isa. lxiv. 6; Phil. iii. 7, 8; Ps. liv. 1; cix. 26; Acts xvi. 30; Ps. li. 7, 8; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19; Rom. vii. 24; 2 Cor. v. 2; Acts v. 41; James ii. 7; Phil. iii. 7, 8; Ps. cxix; John xiii. 35; 1 John iv. 7; iii. 14; John xvi. 9; Rom. xiv. 23; Heb. xi. 6; Ps. xix. 10, 11; Jer. xv. 16; Heb. xi. 24-27; Acts xx. 22-24; xxi. 13. Tit. iii. 15; 2 John i; Ephes. iv. 16.

The Second Observation.

I come now to the second observation propounded to be spoken of; namely,

That they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are often heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them.

I told you, that this observation is implied in the text, and I gather it from the largeness and openness of the promise, *I will in nowise cast out*. For had there not been a proneness in us, to fear casting out, Christ needed not to have, as it were, provided against our fear, as he doth by this remarkable expression, *in nowise*.

“And him that cometh unto me, I will in

nowise cast out." This promise invented by the wisdom of Heaven, and worded in a way to dash in pieces, at one blow, all the objections of coming sinners, need not have been given, I may say, if they were not prone to admit of such objections, to the discouraging of their own souls; for the words, *in nowise*, were dropped by the Lord Jesus to help the faith that is mixed with unbelief.

And it is, as it were, the sum of all promises; neither can any objection be made upon the unworthiness that thou findest in thee, that this promise will not meet.

But I am a sinner, sayest thou.

I will in nowise cast out, says Christ.

But I am an old sinner, sayest thou.

I will in nowise cast out, says Christ.

But I am a hard-hearted sinner, sayest thou.

I will in nowise cast out, says Christ.

But I am a backsliding sinner, sayest thou.

I will in nowise cast out, says Christ.

But I have served Satan all my days, sayest thou.

I will in nowise cast out, says Christ.

But I have sinned against light, sayest thou.

I will in nowise cast out, says Christ.

But I have sinned against mercy, sayest thou.

I will in nowise cast out, says Christ.

But I have done no good thing to bring with me, sayest thou.

I will in nowise cast out, says Christ.

Thus I might go on to show you, that this promise was provided to answer all objections, and does answer them. But I say, this promise

was not needed, if they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are not sometimes, yea, often, heartily afraid, that Jesus Christ will cast them out.

I will give you now two instances, that seem to support the truth of this observation.

In the ninth of Matthew, at the second verse, you read of a man that was sick of the palsy ; and he was coming to Jesus Christ, being borne upon a bed by his friends. He also was coming himself, and that upon another account than any of which his friends were aware ; even for the pardon of his sins, and the salvation of his soul. Now, so soon as he was come into the presence of Christ, Christ bids him be of good cheer. It seems then, his heart was fainting : but what was the cause of his fainting ? Not his bodily infirmity, for the cure of which his friends brought him to Christ ; but the guilt and burden of his sins ; for the pardon of which he himself came to him : therefore Christ says, Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.

Christ saw him sinking in his mind, about how it would go with his soul ; and therefore, first, he applies himself to him upon that account. For though his friends had faith enough, as to the cure of the body, yet he himself had little enough as to the cure of his soul. Therefore Christ takes him up, as a man falling, saying, " Son, be of good cheer ; thy sins be forgiven thee."

A part of the story of the Prodigal seems pertinent also to this matter. When he came to himself, he said, " How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and

I perish for hunger ! I will arise now and go to my father." Heartily spoken. But how did he perform his promises ? I think, not so well as he promised to do : and my ground for this opinion is, that his father, so soon as he was come to him, fell upon his neck and kissed him ; implying, I think, that the prodigal, by this time, was dejected in his mind ; and therefore his father gives him sudden and most familiar tokens of reconciliation.

And kisses were in old times often used to remove doubts and fears. Thus Laban and Esau kissed Jacob ; thus Joseph kissed his brethren ; and thus also David kissed Absalom. Gen. xxxi. 55 ; xxxiii. 4 ; xlviii. 9, 10 ; 2 Sam. xiv. 33.

It is true, as I said, at first setting out he spake heartily, as sometimes sinners also do in their beginning to come to Jesus Christ. But might not he have, yea, in all probability he had, while performing his homeward journey, many a thought, both this way and that, as to whether his father would receive him or not ? Perhaps he thought thus : I said, I would go to my father ; but how, if when I come to him, he should ask me, where I have all this while been, what must I say then ? Also, if he ask me, what is become of the portion of goods that he gave me, what shall I say then ? If he ask who have been my companions, what must I say then ? If he also should ask me, what has been my employment all the time of my absence from him, what shall I say then ? Yea, and if he ask me, why I came home no sooner, what shall I say then ? Thus I say, might

he reason with himself; and being conscious that he could give but a bad answer to any of these interrogatories, no marvel if he stood in need, first of all, of a kiss from his father's lips.

These things considered, and considering again, how prone poor man is to give way, when truly awakened, to despondings, and heart-misgivings, no marvel if he did sink in his mind, between the time of his first setting out, and that of his coming to his father.

3. But, thirdly, I have, for the confirmation of this truth, the consent of all the saints that are under heaven, to wit, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are often heartily afraid that he will not receive them.

Quest. But what should be the reason?

I will answer this question thus:

First. It is not because the revealed will of God affords no ground for the contrary; for of that there is a sufficiency; yea, the text itself hath laid a sufficient foundation for encouragement to them that are coming to Jesus Christ. "And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

Secondly. It is not for want of an invitation to come, for that is full and plain: "Come unto me, all ye that labor, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Matt. xi. 28.

Thirdly. Neither is it for want of manifestation of Christ's willingness to receive, as those texts above named, with that which followeth, declare: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." John vii. 37.

Fourthly. It is not for want of exceeding great and precious promises to receive them that come: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you; and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." 2 Cor. vi. 17, 18.

Fifthly. It is not for want of solemn oath and engagement to save them that come: "For because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself—That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." Heb. vi. 13, 18.

Sixthly. Neither is it for want of great examples of God's mercy, that they have not come to Jesus Christ, of which we read most plentifully in the word.

Therefore, it must be concluded, it is for want of that which follows:

First. It is for want of the knowledge of Christ. Thou knowest but little of the grace and kindness that is in the heart of Christ; thou knowest but little of the virtue and merit of his blood; thou knowest but little of the willingness that is in his heart to save thee. And this is the reason of the fear that arises in thy heart, and causes thee to doubt, that Christ will not receive thee. Unbelief is the daughter of ignorance. Therefore Christ saith, "O fools, and slow of heart to believe." Luke xxiv. 25.

Slowness of heart to believe, flows from thy

foolishness in the things of Christ. This is evident to all that are acquainted with themselves, and are seeking after Jesus Christ. The more ignorance, the more unbelief; the more knowledge of Christ, the more faith. They that know thy name, will put their trust in thee. Ps. ix. 10. He therefore that began to come to Christ but the other day, and hath yet but little knowledge of him, he it is that fears that Christ will not receive him. But he that hath been longer acquainted with him, he is strong, and hath overcome the wicked one. 1 John ii. 13.

When Joseph's brethren came into Egypt to buy corn, it is said Joseph knew his brethren, but his brethren knew not him. What follows? Why, great mistrust of heart about their speeding well; especially if Joseph did but answer them roughly, calling them spies, and questioning their truth, and the like. And observe, so long as their ignorance about their brother remained with them, whatsoever Joseph did, still they put the worst construction upon it: for instance, Joseph, upon a time, bids the steward of his house bring them home to dine with him, to dine even in Joseph's house; and how is this received by them? Why, they are afraid. "And the men were afraid, because they were brought into (their brother) Joseph's house. And they said, He seeketh occasion against us, and will fall upon us, and take us for bondmen, and our asses." Gen. chap. xlii. xliii. What! afraid to go to Joseph's house? He was their brother. He intended to feast them; to feast them, and to feast with them. Ah! but they were ignorant

that he was their brother ; and so long as their ignorance lasted, so long their fear terrified them. Just thus it is with the sinner, that but of late is coming to Jesus Christ. He is ignorant of the love and pity that is in Christ to coming sinners ; therefore he doubts, therefore he fears, therefore his heart misgives him.

Coming sinner, Christ invites thee to dine and sup with him. He invites thee to a banquet of wine ; and his banner over thee shall be love. Cant. ii. 4. But I doubt it, says the sinner : but it is answered, he that calls thee, invites thee to his banquet : flaggons, apples, to his wine, and to the juice of his pomegranate. Oh, I fear, I doubt, I mistrust, I tremble in expectation of the contrary ! Be not afraid, sinner, only believe that him that cometh to Christ, he will in nowise cast out.

Let the coming sinner, therefore, seek after more of the good knowledge of Jesus Christ. Press after it, seek it as silver, and dig for it, as for hidden treasure : this will embolden thee : this will make thee wax stronger and stronger. " I know whom I have believed," I know him, said Paul. And what follows ? Why, " and I am persuaded, that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day." 2 Tim. i. 12.

What had Paul committed to Jesus Christ ? The answer is, he had committed to him his soul. But why did he commit to him his soul ? Why, because he knew him. He knew him to be faithful, to be kind : he knew he would not fail him, nor forsake him ; and therefore he laid his

soul down at his feet, and committed it to him, to keep against that day. But,

Secondly. Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee, may be also a consequence of thy earnest and strong desires after thy salvation by him. For this I observe, that strong desires to have, are attended with strong fears of missing. What man most sets his heart upon, and what his desires are most after, he often most fears he shall not obtain. The ruler of the synagogue had a great desire that his daughter should live; and that desire was attended with fear that she should not: wherefore Christ saith unto him, Be not afraid. Mark v. 36.

Now thou fearest the sins of thy youth, the sins of thine old age, the sins of thy calling, the sins of thy Christian duties; the sins of thy heart, or something; thou thinkest something or other will alienate the heart and affections of Jesus Christ from thee; thou thinkest he sees something in thee, for the sake of which he will refuse thy soul.

But be content; a little more knowledge of him will encourage thee; thy earnest desires shall not be attended with such burning fears; thou shalt hereafter say, This is my infirmity. Ps. lxxvii. 10.

Come sinner, how long is it since thou began to fear, that Jesus Christ will not receive thee? Thy answer is, ever since I began to desire that he would save my soul. I began to fear, when I began to come. And the more my heart burns in desires after him, the more I feel my heart fear I shall not be saved by him.

See now, did I not tell thee, that thy fears were but the consequence of strong desires? Well, fear not, coming sinner; thousands of coming souls are in thy condition, and yet they will get safe into Christ's bosom. Christ says to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: your God will come and save you. Isa. xxxv. 4; lxiii. 1.

Thirdly. Thy fear that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from a sense of thine own unworthiness. Thou seest what a poor, sorry, wretched, worthless creature thou art. And seeing this, thou fearest Christ will not receive thee. Alas! sayest thou, I am the vilest of all men! I am not only a sinner myself, but have made others two-fold worse the children of hell also! Besides, now I am under some awakenings and stirrings of mind after salvation, even now I find my heart rebellious, carnal, hard, treacherous, desperate, prone to unbelief, to despair: it forgets the word, it wanders, it runs to the ends of the earth. There is not, I am persuaded, one in all the world that hath such a desperately wicked heart as mine is! My soul is careless to do good, but none more earnest to do that which is evil!

Can such a man as I am live in glory? Can a holy, a just, and a righteous God once think, with honor to his name, of saving such a vile creature as I am? I fear it. Will he show wonders to such a dog as I am? I doubt it.

I am cast out, to the lothing of my person; yea, I lothe myself. How can I then be accepted by a holy and sin-abhorring God? Ps. xxxviii.

5-7; Ezek. xx. 42-44. Saved I would be ; and who is there that would not, were they in my condition ? Indeed, I wonder at the madness and folly of others, when I see them leap and skip so carelessly about the mouth of hell ! Bold sinner, darest thou tempt God, by laughing at the breach of his holy law ? But, alas ! they are not so bad one way, but I am worse another. I wish myself were any body but myself ; and yet here again, I know not what to wish. When I see such as I believe are coming to Jesus Christ, Oh, I bless them ! but am confounded in myself, to see how unlike I am to a very good many in the world : they can hear, read, pray, remember, repent, be humble, and do every thing better than so vile a wretch as I. I, vile wretch ! am good for nothing, but to burn in hellfire ; and when I think of that, I am confounded too.

Thus the sense of unworthiness creates and heightens fears in the hearts of them that are coming to Jesus Christ. But indeed it should not ; for who needs the physician but the sick ? Or, who did Christ come into the world to save, but the chief of sinners ? 1 Tim. i. 15. Wherefore the more thou seest thy sins, the faster fly thou to Jesus Christ. And let the sense of thine own unworthiness prevail with thee yet to go faster. And if Satan meets thee, and asks whither thou goest, tell him thou art maimed, and art going to the Lord Jesus. If he tells thee of thine own unworthiness, answer him, that even as the sick seek the physician ; as he that hath broken bones seeks him that can set them ; so

thou art going to Jesus Christ, for cure and healing for thy sin-sick soul.

But it often happens that he who flies for his life, despairs of escaping, and therefore delivers himself up into the hand of the pursuer. But up, up, sinner ; be of good cheer ! Christ came to save the unworthy one. Be not faithless, but believe. Come away ; the Lord Jesus calls thee, saying, And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out.

Fourthly. Thy fear that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from a sense of the exceeding mercy of being saved. Sometimes salvation is, in the eyes of him that desires, so great, so wonderful a thing, that the very thoughts of the excellency of it, engenders unbelief about obtaining it, in the hearts of those that unfeignedly desire it. Seemeth it to you, said David, a light thing to be a king's son-in-law ? 1 Sam. xviii. 23. So the thoughts of the greatness and glory of the thing propounded ; as heaven, eternal life, eternal glory ; to be with God and Christ, and angels ; these are great things, things too good, saith the soul that is little in his own eyes ; things too rich, saith the soul that is truly poor in spirit, for me.

Besides, the Holy Ghost magnifies heavenly things to the understanding of the coming sinner ; yea, and at the same time, produces deep convictions too of the sin and unworthiness of that sinner. Now the soul wonders, saying, What ! to be made like angels ; like Christ ; to live in eternal bliss, joy, and felicity ! This is for angels, and for them that can walk like angels.

And is it a wonder, then, to see a soul that is overwhelmed with a sense of glory, and a sense of its own nothingness, confounded in itself, and fearing that the glory apprehended is too great, too good, and too rich for such a one?

Heaven and eternal glory are so great, and I, that would have it, so small, so sorry a creature, that the thought of obtaining it confounds me. Oh, it is too great. It is too great a mercy!

But, coming sinner, let me reason with thee: Thou sayest it is too great. Well, will things that are less satisfy thy soul? Will a less thing than heaven, than glory, and eternal life, answer thy desires? No, nothing less: yet I fear they are too great, and too good, for me ever to obtain. Well, as great and as good as they are, God giveth them to such as thou; they are not too good for God to give; to give freely: be content; He is the eternal God, and giveth like himself. When kings give, they do not give as poor men do. Hence it is said, that Nabal made a feast in his house, like the feast of a king: and again, all these things did Araunah, as a king, give unto David. 1 Sam. xxv. 36; 2 Sam. xxiv. 23. Now God is a great king: let him give like a king; nay, let him give like himself, and do thou receive like thyself: He hath all, and thou hast nothing. God told his people of old, that he would save them in truth and in righteousness; and that they should return to, and enjoy the land, from which, for their sins, they had been banished. And then adds, under a supposition of their counting the mercy too good, or too great: If it be marvellous in the eyes of the remnant of

this people in these days, should it also be marvellous in mine eyes? saith the Lord of hosts. Zech. viii. 6.

As if God should say, they are now in captivity, and little in their own eyes; therefore they think the mercy of returning to Canaan, is a mercy too marvellously great for them to enjoy; but if it be so in their eyes, it is not so in mine: I will do for them like God, if they will but receive my bounty like sinners.

Coming sinner, God can give this heavenly Canaan, and the glory of it, to thee; yea, none ever had them, but as a gift, a free gift: He hath given us his Son, how shall he not then, with him, also freely give us all things?

It was not the worthiness of Abraham, or Moses, or David, or Peter, or Paul; but the mercy of God, that made them inheritors of heaven. If God thinks thee worthy, judge not thyself unworthy; but take it, and be thankful. And it is a good sign that he intends to give, if he hath drawn out thy heart to ask. "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble; thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." Ps. x. 17.

When God is said to incline his ear, it implies an attention to bestow the mercy desired. Take it, therefore; thy wisdom will be to receive, not hesitating on account of thy own unworthiness. It is said, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dung-hill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory." Again, "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and

lifteth the needy out of the dung-hill ; that he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people." 1 Sam. ii. 8 ; Ps. cxiii. 7, 8.

You see, also, when the king made a wedding for his son, he called not the great, nor the rich, nor the mighty, but the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. Matt. xxii. 2-10. Luke xiv. 12, 13.

Fifthly. Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from the suggestions of the devil, who pursues thee. He that hears him roar, must be a mighty Christian, if he can at that time deliver himself from fear. He is called a roaring lion ; and then to allude to that in Isaiah, "If one look unto the land, behold, darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof." 1 Pet. v. 8 ; Isa. v. 30.

There are two things among many, that Satan often suggests to them that are coming to Jesus Christ.

1. That they are not elected. Or,

2. That they have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost.

To both these I answer briefly :

First. Touching election, out of which thou fearest thou art excluded. Why, coming sinner, even the text itself affordeth thee help against this doubt, and that by a double argument.

First. That coming to Christ, is by virtue of the gift, promise, and drawing of the Father : but thou art coming ; therefore God hath given thee, hath promised thee, and is drawing thee to Jesus Christ. Coming sinner, hold to this ; and when Satan begins to tempt again, an-

swer, But I feel my heart moving after Jesus Christ; and that would not be, if it were not given by promise, and drawing to Christ by the power of the Father.

Secondly. Jesus Christ hath promised, that him that cometh to him, he will in nowise cast out. And if he hath said it, will he not make it good, I mean, even thy salvation? For, as I have said already, not to cast out is to receive and admit to the benefit of salvation. If then the Father hath given thee, as is manifest by thy coming; and if Christ will receive thee, thou coming soul, as it is plain he will, because he hath said he will in nowise cast thee out; then be confident, and let those conclusions, that as naturally flow from the text as light from the sun, or water from the fountain, stay thee.

If Satan therefore objecteth that thou art not elected, answer, But I am coming, I am coming; and that I could not be, but that the Father draws; and I am coming to such a Lord Jesus as will in nowise cast me out. Further, were I not elected, the Father would not draw me, nor would the Son so graciously open his bosom to me. I am persuaded that not one of the non-elect shall ever be able to say, no, not in the day of judgment, I did sincerely come to Jesus Christ. Come they may, feigpedly, as Judas and Simon Magus did; but that is not our question. Therefore, O thou honest-hearted coming sinner, be not afraid, but come.

As to the second part of the objection, about sinning the sin against the Holy Ghost; the

same argument also overthrows that also. But I will argue thus :

First. Coming to Christ is by virtue of a special gift of the Father : but the Father giveth no such gift to them that have sinned that sin ; therefore thou that art coming hast not committed that sin. That the Father giveth no such gift to them that have sinned that sin, is evident :

1. Because they have sinned themselves out of God's favor ; they shall never have forgiveness. Matt. xii. 32. But it is a special favor of God to give to a man a disposition to come to Jesus Christ ; because thereby he obtaineth forgiveness. Therefore, he that cometh hath not sinned that sin.

2. They that have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, have sinned themselves out of an interest in the sacrifice of Christ's body and blood. There remains for such no more sacrifice for sin.

But God giveth not grace to any of them that come not to Christ, that have no share in the sacrifice of his body and blood : therefore, thou, that art coming to him, hast not sinned that sin. Heb. ix. 26.

Secondly. Coming to Christ is by the special drawing of the Father : No man cometh to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him : but the Father draweth not him to Christ for whom he hath not allotted forgiveness by his blood. Therefore, they that are coming to Jesus Christ, have not sinned that sin, because

he has allotted them forgiveness by his blood. John vi. 44.

That the Father cannot draw them to Jesus Christ, for whom he hath not allotted forgiveness of sins, is manifest to sense ; for that would be a plain mockery, neither becoming his wisdom, justice, holiness, nor goodness

Thirdly. Coming to Jesus Christ, secures the promise of forgiveness and salvation ; but it is impossible, that he that has sinned that sin, should ever have a promise of these. Therefore he that has sinned that sin, can never have heart to come to Jesus Christ.

Fourthly. Coming to Jesus Christ lays a man under his intercession ; for he ever liveth to make intercession for them that come. Heb. vii. 25. Therefore he that is coming to Jesus Christ cannot have sinned that sin.

Christ has forbidden his people to pray for them that have sinned that sin ; and therefore will not pray for them himself, but prays for them that come.

Fifthly. He that hath sinned that sin, Christ is to him of no more worth, than is a man that is dead ; for he hath crucified to himself the son of God ; yea, and hath also counted his precious blood as an unholy thing. Now he that hath this low esteem for Christ, will never come to him for life ; but the coming man has a high esteem for his person, blood, and merits. Therefore, he that is coming has not committed that sin.

Sixthly. If he that has sinned this sin, might yet come to Jesus Christ, then must the

truth of God be overthrown, which saith, in one place, he hath never forgiveness; and in another, I will in nowise cast him out. Therefore, that he may never have forgiveness, he shall never have heart to come to Jesus Christ. It is impossible that such a one should be renewed either to, or by repentance. Heb. vi. 6. Wherefore, never trouble thy head nor heart about this matter. He that has sincere desires to come to Jesus Christ, cannot have sinned against the Holy Ghost.

Seventhly. Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from thine own folly, in inventing, yea, in thy marking out a way for God to bring thee home to Jesus Christ. Some souls that are coming to Jesus Christ are great tormenters of themselves upon this account. They conclude, that if their coming to Jesus Christ is right, they must needs be brought to him thus and thus. As for instance :

1. Says one, if God is bringing me to Jesus Christ, then will he load me with the guilt of sin, till he makes me cry out again.

2. If God be indeed bringing me to Jesus Christ, then, must I be assaulted with dreadful temptations of the devil.

3. If God be indeed bringing me to Jesus Christ, then even when I come, to him, I shall have wonderful revelations of him.

These are the ways that some sinners appoint for God : but perhaps he will not walk therein ; yet will he bring them to Jesus Christ. But now, because they come not the way they imagined they should, therefore they are at a loss. They

look for a heavy load and burden ; but perhaps God gives them a sight of their lost condition, and adds not that heavy weight and burden. They look for fearful temptations of Satan ; but God sees that yet they are not fit for them. Nor is the time come that he should be honored by them in such a condition. They look for great and glorious revelations of Christ, grace, and mercy. But perhaps God only takes the yoke off, and lays meat before them. And now again, they are at a loss, yet coming to Christ ; I drew, saith God, with cords of a man, with the bands of love : I took the yoke from off their jaws, and laid meat unto them. Hos. xi. 4.

Now, I say, if God brings thee to Christ, and not by the way that thou hast appointed, then thou art at a loss ; and for thy being at a loss, thou mayest thank thyself ; God hath many ways to bring a sinner to Jesus Christ. But he will not give thee beforehand an account of the way by which he will bring thee to Christ. Job xxxiii. 13.

Sometimes he has his way in the whirlwind ; but the Lord is not there. 1 Kings xix. 11.

If God deals more gently with thee, than with others of his children, refuse not the waters that go softly, lest he bring up to thee the waters of the rivers, strong and many, even these two smoking firebrands, the devil, and guilt of sin. Isa. viii. 6, 7. He saith to Peter, Follow me. And what thunder did Zaccheus hear or see ? "Zaccheus, come down," said Christ ; and he came down and received him joyfully.

But had Peter or Zaccheus made the objec-

tion that thou hast made, and directed the Spirit of the Lord, as thou hast done, they might have looked long before they had found themselves coming to Jesus Christ.

Besides, I will tell thee, that a great sense of sin, the hideous roaring of the devil, yea, and abundance of revelation, will not prove that God is bringing the soul to Jesus Christ: as Balaam, Cain, Judas, and others, can witness.

Further, consider, that what thou hast not of these things here, thou mayest have another time, and that to thy distraction: wherefore, instead of being discontented, because thou art not in the fire, because thou hearest not the sound of the trumpet, and alarm of war; pray that thou enter not into temptation; yea, come boldly to the throne of grace, and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Heb. iv. 16.

Poor creature! Thou criest, If I were tempted I could come faster, and with more confidence, to Jesus Christ. Thou sayest thou knowest not what. What says Job? "Withdraw thy hand from me, and let not thy dread make me afraid: Then call thou, and I will answer; or let me speak, and answer thou me." Job xiii. 22. It is not the over-heavy load of sin, but the discovery of mercy; not the roaring of the devil, but the drawing of the Father, that makes a man come to Jesus Christ. I myself know all these things.

True, sometimes, yea, in most cases, they that come to Jesus Christ, come in the way that thou desirest; the burdened tempted way; but the Lord also leads some by the waters of comfort.

I were to choose when to go a long journey ; whether I would go in the dead of winter, or in the pleasant spring ; I would choose to perform it in the pleasant spring, because the way would be more delightful, the days longer and warmer, the nights shorter and not so cold. And it is observable, that the very argument that thou usest, to weaken thy strength in the way, that very argument Christ Jesus useth to encourage his beloved to come to him : “Arise,” saith he, “my love, my fair one, and come away.” Why ? “For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone ; the flowers appear on the earth ; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land ; the fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away.” Cant. ii. 10-12.

Trouble not thyself, coming sinner ; if thou seest thy lost condition, by original and actual sin ; if thou seest thy need of the spotless righteousness of Jesus Christ ; if thou art willing to be found in him, and to take up thy cross and follow him, then pray for a fair wind and good weather, and come away. Do it, I say, lest thou tempt God to lay sorrows upon thee.

Seventhly. Thy fears that Christ will not receive thee, may arise from the sins that thou findest in thy soul, even while thou art coming to him. Some, even as they are coming to Jesus Christ, do find themselves grow worse and worse ; and this is indeed a sore trial to the poor coming sinner.

To explain myself:—There is such a one

coming to Jesus Christ, who, when at first he began to look out after him, was tender, affectionate, and broken in spirit, but now is grown dark, senseless, hard-hearted, and inclining to neglect spiritual duties, &c. Besides, he now finds in himself inclinations to unbelief, atheism, blasphemy, and the like. Now he finds he cannot tremble at God's word, his judgments, nor at the apprehension of hell-fire. Neither can he, as he thinks, be sorry for these things. Now this is a sad dispensation. The man under the sixth head complained for want of temptations, but thou hast enough of them: art thou glad of them, tempted, coming sinner? They that never were exercised with them, may think it a fine thing to be within their power; but he that is there, is ready to sweat blood for sorrow of heart, and to howl for vexation of spirit.

This man is in the wilderness among wild beasts; here he sees a bear, there a lion, yonder a leopard, a wolf, a dragon; devils of all sorts, doubts of all sorts, fears of all sorts, haunt and molest his soul; he hears the sound of a horrible tempest.

O! my friends, even the Lord Jesus, that knew all things, even he saw no pleasure in temptations; nor did he desire to be with them; wherefore, it is said, he was led of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil. Matt. iv. 1; Luke. iv. 1.

But to return: thus it happens sometimes to them that are coming to Jesus Christ. One would think, that he that is flying from wrath to come, has little need of such clogs as these;

and yet so it is, and woful experience proves it. The church of old complained, that her enemies overtook her between the straits; just between hope and fear, heaven and hell. Lam. i. 3.

This man feels the infirmity of his flesh; he finds a proneness in himself to be desperate; now he chides with God, flings and tumbles like a wild bull in a net; and still the guilt of all returns upon himself, to the crushing of him in pieces. Yet he feels his heart so hard, that he can find, as he thinks, no relentings under any of his miscarriages. Now he is a lump of confusion in his own eyes, whose spirit and actions are without order.

Here is now ground for fears of being cast away. Now I see I am lost, says the sinner. This is not coming to Jesus Christ, says the sinner. Such a desperately hard and wretched heart as mine is, cannot be a gracious one, saith the sinner.

Quest. But what will you say to a soul in this condition?

Ans. I will say, that temptations have attended the best of God's people; I will say, that temptations come to do us good; and I will say, also, that there is a difference between growing worse and worse, and thy seeing more clearly how bad thou art.

There is a man of an ill-favored countenance, who has too high a conceit of his beauty; and wanting the benefit of a glass, he still stands in his own conceit; at last a linner is sent unto him, who draws his ill-favored face to the life; and looking upon it, he begins to be convinced,

that he is not half so handsome as he thought he was. Coming sinner, thy temptations are these painters; they have drawn out thy ill-favored heart to the life, and have set it before thine eyes, and now thou seest what thou art.

Hezekiah was a good man, yet when he lay sick, for aught I know, he had too good an opinion of his heart; and for aught I know, also, the Lord might, upon his recovery, leave him to a temptation, that he might better know all that was in his heart. Compare Isa. xxxviii. 1, 3 with 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

Alas! we are sinful out of measure, but see it not to the full, until the hour of temptation comes. But when it comes, like the painter, it draws our heart to the life. Yet the sight of what we are, should not keep us from coming to Jesus Christ.

There are two ways, by which God gives a man a sight of the wickedness of his heart. One is, by the light of the word and Spirit of God; and the other is, by the temptations of the devil. By the first, we see our wickedness one way, and by the second, another. By the light of the word and Spirit of God, thou hast a sight of thy wickedness; and by the light of the sun, thou hast a sight of the spots and defilements that are in thy house and raiment; which light leads thee to see the necessity of cleansing, but maketh not the blemishes to spread. But when Satan comes, when he tempts, he puts life and rage into our sins, and turns them, as it were, into so many devils within us. Now, like prisoners, they attempt to break through the prison of our body;

they will attempt to influence our eyes, mouth, ears, any way, to the scandal of the gospel, and reproach of religion : to the darkening of our evidences, and the damning of our souls.

But I shall say, as I said before, this has often been the lot of God's people. There hath no temptation taken you, but such as is common to man ; but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able. 1 Cor. x. 13. See the book of Job, the book of Psalms, and that of the Lamentations. And remember, farther, that Christ himself was tempted to blaspheme, to worship the devil, and to murder himself : Matt. iv. 1-11 ; Luke iv. 1-13 ; temptations worse than which, thou canst hardly be overtaken with. But he was sinless, that is true ; and he is thy Saviour, that is also true. Yea, it is equally true, also, that by his being tempted, he became the conqueror of the tempter, and a succourer of those that are tempted. Col. ii. 14, 15 ; Heb. ii. 14 ; iv. 15, 16.

Quest. But what should be the reason that some that are coming to Christ, should be so lamentably cast down, and buffeted with temptations.

Ans. It may be for several causes.

First. Some that are coming to Christ, cannot be persuaded, until the temptation comes, that they are so vile as the Scripture declares them to be ; true, they see so much of their wretchedness, as to drive them to Christ ; but there is wickedness which they see not. Peter little thought that he had had cursing, and swearing, and lying, and an inclination in his heart to deny

his Master, before the temptation came: but when that indeed came upon him, then he found it here to his sorrow. John xiii; 36-38; Mark xiv. 36-40; 66-72.

Secondly. Some that are coming to Jesus Christ, are too much affected with their own graces, and too little taken with Christ's person; wherefore God, to take them off from doting on their own jewels, and that they may look more to the person, undertaking, and merits of his Son, plunges them into the mire by temptations. And this I take to be the meaning of Job: "If I wash myself," said he, "with snow-water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou plunge me into the ditch, and mine own clothes shall abhor me." Job ix. 30, 31. Job had been a little too much tampering with his own graces, and setting his excellencies a little too high; as these texts make manifest. Job xxxiv. 5-9; xxxv. 2, 3; xxxviii. 1, 2; xl. 1-4; xlii. 4-6. But when the temptations were ended, you find him better taught.

Yea, God does often even for this thing, as it were, take our graces from us, and so leave us almost quite to ourselves, and to the tempter, that we may learn, not to love the picture more than the person of his Son. See how he dealt with them in the 16th of Ezekiel, and the 2d of Hosea.

Thirdly. Perhaps thou hadst been given too much to judge thy brother, and to condemn thy brother, because a poor tempted man. And God, to bring down the pride of thy heart, lets the tempter loose upon thee, that thou also mayest

feel thyself weak. For "pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Prov. xvi. 18.

Fourthly. It may be thou hast dealt a little too roughly with those that God hath in this way wounded; not considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted: and therefore God hath suffered it to come unto thee. Gal. vi. 1.

Fifthly. It may be thou wast given to slumber and sleep, and therefore these temptations were sent to awaken thee. You know that Peter's temptation came upon him after his sleeping; then instead of watching and praying, he denied, and denied, and denied his master. Matt. xxvi.

Sixthly. It may be thou hast presumed too far, and stood too much on thine own strength, and therefore is a time of temptation come upon thee. This was also one cause why it came upon Peter: "Though all men forsake thee, yet will not I." Ah! that is the way to be tempted indeed. John xiii. 36, 38.

Seventhly. It may be God intends to make thee wise, to speak a word in season to others that are afflicted; and therefore he suffered thee to be tempted. Christ was tempted, that he might be able to succour them that are tempted. Heb. ii. 18.

Eighthly. It may be Satan hath dared God to suffer him to tempt thee; promising himself, that if he will but suffer him to do it, thou wilt curse him to his face. Thus he obtained leave against Job; wherefore take heed, tempted soul, lest thou prove the devil's sayings true. Job i. 9-11; ii. 4, 5.

Ninthly. It may be thy graces must be tried in the fire, that the rust which cleaveth to them, may be taken away, and themselves proved, both before angels and devils, to be far better than of gold that perisheth ; it may be, also, that thy graces are to receive special praises, and honour, and glory, at the coming of the Lord Jesus to judgment for resistance, in the day of thy temptation. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

Tenthly. It may be God would have others learn, by thy sighs, groans, and complaints under temptations, to beware of those sins, for the sake of which thou art at present delivered to the tormentors.

But to conclude this ; allow thy case to be as bad as it can be, and suppose that thou art to this day without the grace of God, yet thou art but a miserable creature, a sinner, that has need of a blessed Saviour ; and the text presents thee with one, as good and kind as heart can wish ; who also for thy encouragement saith, “ And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out.”

A WORD OF APPLICATION.

Is it so, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are often heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them ?

Then this teacheth us these things :

First. That faith and doubting may at the same time have their residence in the same soul ; “ O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt ?” Mattt. xiv. 31. He saith not, O thou of no faith ; but, O thou of little faith ; because he had a little faith in the midst of many doubts.

The same is true, even of many that are coming to Jesus Christ. They come, and fear they come not, and doubt they come not. When they look upon the promise, or a word of encouragement by faith, then they come; but when they look upon themselves, or the difficulties that lie before them, then they doubt. Bid me come, said Peter: Come, said Christ. So he went down out of the ship to Jesus; but to go to him upon the water; there was the trial. So it is with the poor desiring soul. Bid me come, says the sinner. Come, says Christ, and I will in no wise cast thee out. So he comes, but he must come upon the water, upon drowning difficulties; if, therefore, the wind of temptations blow, the waves of doubts and fears will presently arise; and the coming sinner will presently sink, if he has but little faith.

But you shall find here, in Peter's little faith, a two-fold act; to wit, coming and crying. Little faith cannot come all the way without crying. So long as its holy boldness lasts, so long it can come in peace; but when it ceases it can come no farther; it will go the rest of the way with crying. Peter went as far as his little faith would carry him; he also cried, as far as his little faith would help, "Lord, save me, I perish." And so, with coming and crying, he was kept from sinking, though he had but a little faith. Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

Secondly. Is it so, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are often heartily afraid that

Jesus Christ will not receive them? Then this shows the reason of that dejection, and those castings down, that we very often perceive in them that are coming to Jesus Christ; it is because they are afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive them. 'The poor world mock us, because we are a dejected people; I mean, because we are sometimes so; but they do not know the cause of our dejections. Could we be persuaded, even then, when we are dejected, that Jesus Christ would indeed receive us, it would put more gladness into our hearts, than in the time in which their corn and their wine increased. Ps. iv. 6, 7.

Thirdly. Is it so, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are often heartily afraid that he will not receive them? Then this shows, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ are an awakened, sensible, considering people: for fear cometh from sense and consideration of things. They are sensible of sin, sensible of the glorious majesty of God, and of what a blessed thing it is to be received of Jesus Christ. The glory of heaven, and the evil of sin; these things they consider, and are sensible of. "When I remember, I am afraid; when I consider, I am afraid." Job xxi. 6; xxiii. 15.

These things dash their spirits, being awake and sensible. Were they dead, like other men, they would not be afflicted with fear, as they are; for dead men fear not, feel not, care not; but the living and sensible man, he it is that is sometimes heartily afraid that Jesus Christ will not receive him. I say, the dead and senseless are

not distressed : they presume, they are groundlessly confident. These indeed should fear and be afraid, because they are not coming to Jesus Christ. O ! the hell, the fire, the pit, the wrath of God, and torment of hell, that are prepared for poor neglecting sinners ? How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation ? Heb. ii. 3. But they are dead, and so cannot fear.

Fourthly. Is it so, that they that are coming to Jesus Christ, are often heartily afraid that he will not receive them ? Then this should teach old Christians to pity and pray for young comers. You know the heart of a stranger ; for you yourselves were strangers in the land of Egypt. You know the fears, and doubts, and terrors, that take hold of them, for they sometimes took hold of you : wherefore pity them, pray for them, encourage them ; they need all this ; guilt hath overtaken them ; fear of the wrath of God hath overtaken them ; perhaps they are within the sight of hell-fire, and the fear of going thither is burning hot within their hearts. You may know how strangely Satan is suggesting doubts to them, that if possible, he may sink and drown them, with the multitude and weight of them. Old Christians should mend up the path for them, and take the stumbling-blocks out of the way, lest that which is feeble and weak be turned aside : but let it rather be healed. Heb. xii.

I COME NOW TO THE NEXT OBSERVATION, AND
SHALL SPEAK A LITTLE OF THAT.

Jesus Christ would not have them, that in

truth are coming to him, once think that he will cast them out

The text is full of this: for he saith, "And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out." Now, if he saith I will not, he would not have us think he will.

This is yet farther manifest by these considerations:

First. Christ Jesus did forbid even them that as yet were not coming to him, to think him such a one. "Do not think," said he, "that I will accuse you to the Father." John v. 45.

These, as I said, were such as were not yet coming to him: for he saith of them a little before, "And ye will not come to me:" for the respect they had to the honour that cometh from men kept them back. Yet, I say, Jesus Christ gives them to understand, that though he might justly reject them, yet he would not; but bids them not once to think that he would accuse them to the Father. Now, not to accuse (with Christ) is to plead for: for Christ, in these things, stands neuter between the Father and sinners. So then, if Jesus Christ would not have them think, who *yet* will not come to him, that he will accuse them; then he would not that they should think so, who in truth are coming to him: "And him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out."

Secondly. When the woman taken in adultery was brought before Jesus Christ, he evidently manifested, both by his words and actions, that condemning, and casting out, were things, for

the doing of which he came not into the world. John viii. 3-11.

Not but that he indeed abhorred the fact, but he would not condemn the woman for the sin, because that was not his office ; he was not sent “ into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.” John iii. 17. Now if Christ, though urged to it, would not condemn the guilty woman, though she was far at present from coming to him, he would not that they should once think that he will cast them out, that in truth are coming to him : “ And him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out.”

Thirdly. Christ plainly bids the turning sinner come ; and forbids him to entertain any such thought, as that he will cast him out. “ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” Isa. lv. 7.

The Lord, by bidding the unrighteous forsake his thoughts, doth especially forbid, as I have said, those thoughts that hinder the coming man in his progress to Jesus Christ, his unbelieving thoughts.

Therefore he bids him not only forsake his way, but his thoughts : “ Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts.” It is not enough to forsake one, if thou wilt come to Jesus Christ ; because the other will keep thee from him. Suppose a man forsakes his wicked ways, his debauched and filthy life ; yet

if these thoughts, that Jesus Christ will not receive him, be entertained and nourished in his heart, they will keep him from coming to Jesus Christ.

Sinner, coming sinner, art thou for coming to Jesus Christ? Yes, says the sinner. Forsake thy wicked ways then. So I do, says the sinner. Why comest thou then so slowly? Because I am hindered. What hinders? Has God forbidden thee? No. Art thou not willing to come faster? Yes, but I cannot. Well, be plain with me, and tell me the reason and ground of thy discouragement. Why, answers the sinner, though God forbids me not, and though I am willing to come faster, yet there naturally arises this and that, and the other thought in my heart, that hinders my speed to Jesus Christ. Sometimes I think I am not chosen; sometimes I think I am not called; sometimes I think I am come too late; and sometimes I think I know not what it is to come. At another time I think I have no grace; and then again, that I cannot pray; and then again, I think that I am a great hypocrite. And these things keep me from coming to Jesus Christ.

Look, now, did I not tell you so? There are thoughts yet remaining in the heart, even of those who have forsaken their wicked ways; and with those thoughts they are more tormented than with any thing else, because they hinder their coming to Jesus Christ. For the sin of unbelief which is the original of all these thoughts, is that which besets a coming sinner more easily than doth his ways. Heb. xii. 1-4.

But now, since Jesus Christ commands thee to forsake these thoughts, forsake them, coming sinner. And if thou forsake them not, thou transgressest the commands of Christ, and abidest thine own tormentor, and keepest thyself from establishment in grace: "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Isa. vii. 9.

Thus you see, how Jesus Christ setteth himself against those thoughts that any way discourage the coming sinner; and thereby truly vindicates the doctrine we would establish, namely, that Jesus Christ would not have them that in truth are coming to him, for a moment harbor the thought that he will cast them out. "And him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out."

I NOW COME TO THE REASONS OF THE OBSERVATION.

First. If Jesus Christ should allow thee once to think that he will cast thee out, he must allow thee to think that he will falsify his word: for he hath said, I will in nowise cast out. But Christ would not that thou shouldest count him as one that will falsify his word: for he saith of himself, I am the truth. Therefore he would not that any who in that truth are coming to him, should once think that he will cast them out.

Secondly. If Jesus Christ should allow the sinner that in truth is coming to him, once to think that he will cast him out: then he must allow, and so countenance the first appearance of unbelief, which he counts his greatest enemy, and against which he has bent even his holy

Gospel. Therefore Jesus Christ would not that they, who in truth are coming to him, should once think that he will cast them out. See Matt. xiv. 31 ; xxi. 21 ; Mark xi. 23 ; Luke xxiv. 25.

Thirdly. If Jesus Christ should allow the coming sinner once to think that he will cast him out, then he must allow him to make a question, whether he is willing to receive his Father's gift : for the coming sinner is his Father's gift ; as also says the text ; but he testifieth, all that the Father giveth him shall come to him ; and him that cometh he will in nowise cast out.

Fourthly. If Jesus Christ should allow them once to think (who indeed are coming to him) that he will cast them out, he must allow them to think that he will despise and reject the drawing of his Father : for no man can come to him, but whom the Father draweth. But it would be high blasphemy and damnable wickedness once to imagine thus.

Fifthly. If Jesus Christ should allow those that indeed are coming to him once to think that he will cast them out, he must allow them to think that he will be unfaithful to the trust and charge that his Father hath committed to him ; which is to save, and not to lose any thing of that which he hath given unto him to save. John vi. 37. But the Father hath given him a charge to save the coming sinner, and we cannot question his ability and willingness to do it ; for he says, " I came down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." Ver. 38.

Sixthly. If Jesus Christ should allow that

they should once think, who are coming to him, that he will cast them out, then he must allow them to think that he will be unfaithful to his office of priesthood. For, as by the first part of it, he paid a price for, and ransomed souls; so by the second part thereof, he continually maketh intercession to God for them that come. Heb. vii. 25. But he cannot allow us to question his faithful execution of his priesthood.

Seventhly. If Jesus Christ should allow us once to think that the coming sinner shall be cast out, then he must allow us to question his will, or power, or merit to save. But he cannot allow us to question any of these; therefore not once to think that the coming sinner shall be cast out.

1. He cannot allow us to question his will; for he saith in the text, "I will in nowise cast out."

2. He cannot allow us to question his power; for the Holy Ghost saith, "He is able to save to the uttermost them that come."

3. He cannot allow us to question the efficacy of his merit: "For the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin." 1 John i. 7.

Eighthly. If Jesus Christ should allow the coming sinner once to think that he will cast him out, he must allow him to give the lie to the manifest testimony of the Father, Son, and Spirit; yea, to the whole Gospel contained in Moses, the Prophets, the book of Psalms, and that commonly called the New Testament. But he cannot allow of this.

Ninthly. Lastly, if Jesus Christ should allow

him that is coming to him once to think that he will cast him out, he must allow him to question his Father's oath, which he in truth and righteousness hath taken, that they might have a strong consolation who have fled for refuge to Jesus Christ. But he cannot allow this : therefore he cannot allow that the coming sinner should once think that he will cast him out. Heb. vi.

THE GENERAL APPLICATION OF THE WHOLE SUBJECT AND THE CONCLUSION.

First, the text informs us, that men by nature are far off from Christ.

Let me make this plain, by answering three questions.

1. Where is he that is not coming to Jesus Christ?

2. What is he that is not coming to Jesus Christ?

3. Whither is he to go that cometh not to Jesus Christ?

First. Where is he that is not coming to Jesus Christ?

Ans. 1. He is far from God, he is without him, even alienated from him, both in his understanding, will, affections, judgment, and conscience. Eph. ii. 12 ; iv. 8.

2. He is far from Jesus Christ, who is the only deliverer of men from hell-fire. Ps. lxii. 6.

3. He is far from the work of the Holy Ghost, the work of regeneration, and a second creation, without which no man shall see the kingdom of heaven. John iii. 3.

4. He is far from being righteous ; from that righteousness which alone can make him acceptable in God's sight. Isa. xlv. 12, 13.

5. He is under the power and dominion of sin. Sin reigneth in and over him ; it dwelleth in every faculty of his soul, and member of his body ; so that from head to foot there is no place clean. Isa. i. 6 ; Rom. iii. 9-18.

6. His life is among the unclean ; he is in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Job xxxvi. 14 ; Acts viii. 23.

7. He is in sin, in the flesh, in death, in the snare of the devil, and is taken captive by him at his will. 1 Cor. xv. 17 ; Rom. viii. 8 ; 1 John iii. 8 ; 2 Tim. ii. 26.

8. He is under the curse of the law, and the devil dwells in him, and hath the mastery of him, Gal. iii. 12 ; Eph. ii. 2, 3 ; Acts xxvi. 18.

9. He is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knows not whither he goes ; for darkness has blinded his eyes.

10. He is in the broad way that leadeth to destruction ; and holding on, he will assuredly go in at the broad gate, and so go down to hell.

Secondly. What is he that cometh not to Jesus Christ ?

1. He is counted one of God's enemies. Luke xix. 14 ; Rom. viii. 7.

2. He is a child of the devil, and of hell ; and hell must swallow him at last, because he cometh not to Jesus Christ. John viii. 44 ; 1 John iii. 8 ; Matt. xxiii. 15 ; Ps. ix. 17.

3. He is a child of wrath, an heir of it ; it is

his portion; and God will repay it him to his face. Eph. ii. 1-3; Job xxi. 29-31.

4. He is a self-murderer; he wrongeth his own soul, and is one that loveth death. Prov. i. 18; viii. 35, 36.

5. He is a companion for devils and lost men. Prov. xxi. 16; Matt. xxv. 41.

Thirdly. Whither is he like to go, that cometh not to Jesus Christ?

1. He that cometh not to him, will go farther from him; for every sin is a step farther from Jesus Christ. Hos. xi.

2. As he is in darkness, so will he probably go on in it: for Christ is the light of the world, and he that comes not to him, walketh in darkness. John viii. 12.

3. He is likely to be removed, at last, as far from God and Christ, and heaven and all felicity, as an infinite God can remove him. Matt. xxv. 41.

But, *Secondly*, This doctrine of coming to Christ informs us where poor destitute sinners may find life for their souls, and that is in Christ. This life is in his Son; he that hath the Son, hath life. And again, "Whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord." Prov. viii. 35.

Now for farther enlargement, I will also here propound three more questions:

1. What is life in Christ?

2. Who may have it?

3. Upon what terms?

First. What is life in Jesus Christ?

1. There is justifying life in Christ. Man by

sin is dead in law; and Christ only can deliver him, by his righteousness and blood, and raise him from this death into a state of life: "For God sent his Son into the world, that we might live through him." 1 John iv. 9. That is, through the righteousness which he should accomplish, and the death which he should die.

2. There is eternal life in Christ; life that is endless; life for ever and ever. "God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." 1 John v. 11.

Now justification and eternal salvation being both in Christ, and no where else to be had for men, who would not come to Jesus Christ?

Secondly. Who may have this life?

I answer, poor, helpless, miserable sinners; particularly,

1. Such as are willing to have it: "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Rev. xxii. 17.

2. He that thirsteth for it: "I will give to him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely." Rev. xxi. 6.

3. He that is weary of his sins: "This is the rest wherewith ye may cause the weary to rest; and this is the refreshing." Isa. xxviii. 12.

4. He that is poor and needy: "He shall spare the poor and needy, and shall save the souls of the needy." Ps. lxxii. 13.

5. He that followeth after him crying for life: "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." John viii. 12.

Thirdly. Upon what terms may we have this life ?

Ans. Freely. Sinner, dost thou hear ? Thou mayest have it freely. Let him take the water of life freely : “ I will give him of the fountain of the water of life freely.” “ And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both.” Luke vii. 42.

Freely, without money, and without price. “ Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price.” Isa. lv. 1.

Sinner, art thou thirsty ? Art thou weary ? Art thou willing ? Come, then, for all the good that is in Christ is offered to the coming sinner, without money, and without price. He has life to give away to such as want it, and that have not a penny to purchase it ; and he will give it freely. O, what a blessed condition is the coming sinner in !

But, *Fourthly*, This doctrine of coming to Jesus Christ for life, informs us that it is to be had no where else. Were it to be had any where else, the text, and him that spoke it, would be but little valued. Would the promise, *I will in nowise cast out*, be much esteemed, if another stood by that could receive them ? But here appears the glory of Christ, that none but he can save. And here appears his love, that though none can save but he, yet he casts none away.

That none can save but Jesus Christ, is evident from Acts iv. 12 : “ Neither is there salvation in any other ;” and “ God hath given to us

eternal life, and this life is in his Son." If life could have been had any where else, it should have been in the law ; but it is not in the law ; for by the deeds of the law no man living shall be justified ; and if not justified, then no life.

Therefore life is nowhere to be had, but in Jesus Christ. Gal. iii.

Quest. But why would God so order it, that life should be had nowhere else, but in Jesus Christ ?

Ans. There is reason for it ; and that both with respect to God and us.

1. With respect to God.

First. That it might be in a way of justice, as well as mercy. And in a way of justice it could not have been, if it had not been by Christ ; because he, and he only, was able to answer the demands of the law ; and give for sin what the justice thereof required. All angels had been crushed down to hell for ever, had that curse been laid upon them for our sins, which was laid upon Jesus Christ : but it was laid upon him, and he bare it ; and answered the penalty, and redeemed his people from under it, with perfect satisfaction to Divine justice ; so that God himself doth now proclaim, that he is faithful and just to forgive us, if by faith we shall venture to Jesus Christ, and trust to what he has done, for life. Rom. iii. 24-26 : John i. 9.

Secondly. Life must be by Jesus Christ, that God might be adored and magnified, for finding out this way. This is the Lord's doings, that in all things he might be glorified through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Thirdly. It must be by Jesus Christ, that life might be at God's disposal, who hath great pity for the poor, the lowly, the meek, the broken in heart; and for them that others care not for. Ps. xxxiv. 6; cxxxviii. 6; xxv. 9; li. 17; cxlii. 3.

Fourthly. Life must be in Christ, to cut off boasting from the lips of men. This also is the apostle's reason in Rom. iii. 20, 27; Eph. ii. 8-10.

2. Life must be in Jesus Christ, with *respect to us*.

First. That we might have it upon the easiest terms, to wit, *freely*: as a gift, not as wages. Were it in Moses' hand, we should come hardly at it. Were it in the pope's hand, we should pay heavily for it. But thanks to God, it is in Christ, laid up in him, and by him to be communicated to sinners upon easy terms, even for receiving, accepting, and embracing with thanksgiving: as the scriptures plainly declare. John i. 12; Heb. xi. 13; Col. iii. 13-15.

Secondly. Life is in Christ *for us*, that it might not be upon so brittle a foundation, as indeed it would, had it been any where else. The law itself is weak, because of us, as to this: but Christ is a tried stone, a sure foundation, one that will not fail to bear thy burden, and to receive thy soul, coming sinner.

Thirdly. Life is in Christ, that it might be sure to all the seed. Alas! the best of us, were life left in our hands, would be sure to forfeit it, over, and over, and over. Or, were it in any other hand, we should, by our frequent backslidings, so offend him, that at last he would shut

up his bowels in everlasting displeasure against us. But now it is in Christ, it is in one that can have compassion upon us, when we are out of the way ; with one that hath a heart to fetch us again when we are gone astray ; with one that can pardon without upbraiding. Blessed be God, that life is in Christ ! For now it is sure to all the seed. But,

Fourthly. This doctrine of coming to Jesus Christ for life informs us of the evil of unbelief: that wicked thing, that is the only or chief hinderance to the coming sinner. Does the text say, *Come* ? Does it say, “ And him that cometh to me I will in nowise cast out ? ” Then what an evil is that, that keepeth sinners from coming to Jesus Christ ? And that evil is unbelief: for by faith we come ; by unbelief we keep away. Therefore it is said to be that by which a soul is said to depart from God ; because it was that which at first caused the world to go off from him ; and that also which keeps them from him to this day. And it doth it the more easily, because it doth it deceitfully.

This sin may be called the *White Devil*, for it oftentimes, in its mischievous doing in the soul, appears as if it were an angel of light : yea, it acteth like a counsellor of heaven. Therefore I will discourse a little of this evil disease.

First. It is that sin, *above all others*, that hath some show of *reason* in its attempts: for it keeps the soul from Christ, by pretending its present unfitness and unpreparedness ; as want of more sense of sin, want of more repentance, want of more humility, want of a more broken heart.

Secondly. It is the sin that most easily deceives the conscience. The conscience of the coming sinner tells him that he hath nothing good, that he stands indictable for ten thousand talents ; that he is a very ignorant, blind, and hard-hearted sinner, unworthy to be once taken notice of by Jesus Christ. And will you (says unbelief) in such a case as you now are, presume to come to Jesus Christ?

Thirdly. It is the sin that most accords with our *feelings*. The coming sinner feels the workings of sin, of all manner of sin and wretchedness in his flesh : he also feels the wrath and judgment of God due to sin, and oftentimes staggers under it. Now, says unbelief, you may see you have no grace, for that which works in you is corruption. You may also perceive that God does not love you, because the sense of his wrath abides upon you. Therefore how can you have the face to come to Jesus Christ?

Fourthly. It is the sin, above all others, that best suits the wisdom of our flesh. The wisdom of our flesh thinks it prudence to question a while, to stand back a while, to hearken to both sides a while ; and not to be rash, sudden, or unadvised, in too bold a presuming upon Jesus Christ. And this wisdom unbelief falls in with.

Fifthly. It is the sin, above all others, that continually is whispering the soul in the ear, with mistrust of the faithfulness of God in keeping promise to them that come to Jesus Christ for life. It also suggests mistrust about Christ's willingness to receive it. And no sin can do this so artfully as unbelief.

Sixthly. It is also that sin which is always at hand to enter an objection against this or that promise, that by the Spirit of God is brought to our heart to comfort us : and if the poor coming sinner is not aware of it, it will by some exaction, sleight, trick, or cavil, quickly wrest from him the promise again, and he will have but little benefit from it.

Seventhly. It is that above all other sins, that weakens our prayers, our faith, our love, our diligence, our hope and expectations. It even takes the heart away from God in duty.

Eighthly. Lastly, this sin, as I have said even now, appears in the soul with so many sweet pretences to safety and security, that it is, as it were, counsel sent from heaven ; bidding the soul be wise, wary, considerate, well advised, and to take heed of too rash a venture upon believing. Be sure first, that God loves you ; take hold of no promise until you are forced by God unto it : neither be you sure of your salvation ; doubt it still, though the testimony of the Lord has been often confirmed in you. Live not by faith, but by sense ; and when you can neither see nor feel, then fear and mistrust, then doubt and question all. This is the counsel of unbelief, which is so covered over with specious pretences, that the wisest Christian can hardly shake off these reasonings.

But to be brief, let me here give thee, Christian reader, a more particular description of the qualities of unbelief, by opposing faith unto it, in these twenty-five particulars.

1. Faith believeth the word of God, but un-

belief questioneth the uncertainty of the same. Ps. cvi. 24.

2. Faith believeth the word because it is true ; but unbelief doubteth thereof, because it is true. 1 Tim. iv. 1 ; John viii. 45.

3. Faith sees more in a promise of God to help, than in all other things to hinder ; but unbelief, notwithstanding God's promise, saith, How can these things be ? Rom. iv. 19, 21 ; 2 Kings vii. 2 ; John iii. 11, 12.

4. Faith will make thee see love in the heart of Christ, when with his mouth he giveth re-proofs ; but unbelief will imagine wrath in his heart, when with his mouth and word he saith he loveth us. Matt. xv. 22-28.

5. Faith will help the soul to wait, though God defers to give ; but unbelief will doubt and give up all, if God makes any tarrying. Ps. xxv. 5 ; Isa. viii. 17 ; 2 Kings vi. 33 ; Ps. c. 13, 14.

6. Faith will give comfort in the midst of fears, but unbelief causeth fears in the midst of comforts. 2 Chron. xx. 20, 21 ; Matt. viii. 26 ; Luke xxiv. 36, 37.

7. Faith will draw sweetness out of God's rod ; but unbelief can find no comfort in his greatest mercies. Ps. xxiii. 4 ; Num. xxi. 8, 9.

8. Faith maketh great burdens light ; but unbelief maketh light ones intolerably heavy. 2 Cor. xii. 14-18 ; Mal. i. 12, 13.

9. Faith helps us when we are down ; but unbelief throws us down when we are up. Micah vii. 8-10 ; Heb. iv. 11.

10. Faith brings us near to God, when we are from him ; but unbelief puts us far from

God, when we are near to him. Heb. x. 23; iii. 12, 13.

11. Where faith reigns, it declares men to be the friends of God; but where unbelief reigns, it declares them to be his enemies. James ii. 23; Heb. iii. 18; Rev. xxi. 8.

12. Faith puts a man under grace; but unbelief holds him under wrath. Rom. iii. 24–26; Eph. ii. 8; John iii. 36; 1 John v. 10; Heb. iii. 17; Mark xvi. 16.

13. Faith purifies the heart; but unbelief keeps it polluted and impure. Acts xv. 9; Tit. i. 15, 16.

14. By faith the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us; but by unbelief we are shut up under the law to perish. Rom. iv. 23, 24; xi. 32; Gal. ii. 16.

15. Faith makes our work acceptable to God through Christ; but whatsoever is of unbelief is sin: for without faith it is impossible to please him. Heb. xi. 6; Rom. xiv. 23.

16. Faith gives us peace and comfort in our souls; but unbelief worketh trouble and tossings, like the restless waves of the sea. Rom. v. 1; James i. 6.

17. Faith makes us see preciousness in Christ; but unbelief sees no form, beauty or comeliness in him. 1 Peter ii. 7; Isaiah liii. 1–3.

18. By faith we have our life in Christ's fullness; but by unbelief we starve and pine away. Gal. ii. 20.

19. Faith gives us the victory over the law, sin, death, the devil, and all evils; but unbelief

lays us obnoxious to them all. 1 John v. 4, 5; Luke xii. 46.

20. Faith will show us more excellency in things not seen, than in them that are: but unbelief sees more in things that are, than in things that will be hereafter. 2 Cor. iv. 18; Heb. xi. 24-27.

21. Faith makes the ways of God pleasant and delightful; but unbelief maketh them heavy and hard. Gal. v. 6; 1 Cor. xii. 10, 11; John vi. 60; Ps. ii. 3.

22. By faith, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob possessed the land of promise; but because of unbelief, neither Aaron, nor Moses, nor Miriam, could get thither. Heb. xi. 9; iii. 19.

23. By faith the children of Israel passed through the Red Sea; but by unbelief the generality of them perished in the wilderness. Heb. xi. 29; Jude 5.

24. By faith Gideon did more with three hundred men, and a few empty pitchers, than all the twelve tribes could do; because they believed not God. Judges vii. 16-22; Num. xiv. 11.

25. By faith Peter walked on the water; but by unbelief he began to sink. Matt. xiv. 28-30.

Thus might many more be added, which for the sake of brevity I omit; besecching every one that thinks he hath a soul to save or be damned, to take heed of *unbelief*; lest, seeing there is a promise left us of entering into his rest, any of us, by *unbelief*, should indeed come short of it.

IMPORTANCE OF EXAMINING WHETHER ONE HAS
COME TO CHRIST.

We come to *self-examination*. Sinner, thou hast heard of the necessity of *coming to Christ*; also of the willingness of *Christ* to receive the *coming soul*; together with the benefit that *they* by him shall have that indeed come to him. Put thyself now upon this serious inquiry, *Am I indeed come to Jesus Christ?*

Many motives I might here urge to prevail with thee to a conscientious performance of this duty; as,

1. Thou art in sin, in the flesh, in death, in the snare of the devil, and under the curse of the law, if thou art not coming to Jesus Christ.

2. There is no way to be delivered from these, but by coming to Jesus Christ.

3. If thou comest, Jesus Christ will receive thee, and *will in nowise cast thee out*.

4. Thou wilt not repent it in the day of judgment, if thou now comest to Jesus Christ.

5. But thou wilt surely mourn at last, if now thou shalt refuse to come. And,

6. Lastly: Now thou hast been invited to come; now will thy judgment be greater, and thy damnation more fearful, if thou shalt yet refuse, than if thou hadst never heard of coming to Christ.

Obj. But we hope we are come to Jesus Christ.

Ans. It is well if it prove so; but lest thou shouldst speak without ground, and so fall unawares, into hell-fire, let us examine a little.

First. Art thou indeed coming to Jesus Christ? What hast thou left behind thee? What didst thou come away from, in thy coming to Jesus Christ?

When Lot came out of Sodom, he left the Sodomites behind him. Gen. xix.

When Abraham came out of Chaldea, he left his country and kindred behind him. Gen. xii. 1; Acts vii. 3.

When Ruth came to put her trust under the wings of the Lord God of Israel; she left her father and mother, her gods, and the land of her nativity behind her. Ruth i. 15, 17; ii. 11, 12.

When Peter came to Christ, he left his nets behind him. Matt. iv. 20.

When Zaccheus came to Christ, he left the receipt of custom behind him. Luke xviii. 2-9.

When Paul came to Christ, he left his own righteousness behind him. Phil. iii. 7, 8.

When those that used curious arts came to Jesus Christ, they took their books and burned them, though in another man's eye they were counted worth fifty thousand pieces of silver. Acts xix. 19.

What sayest thou, man? Hast thou left thy darling sins, thy Sodomitish pleasures, thy acquaintance, and vain companions; thy unlawful gain, thy idle gods, and thy unlawful, curious arts behind thee? If any of these be with thee, and thou with them, in thy heart and life, thou art not yet come to Jesus Christ.

Secondly. Art thou come to Jesus Christ? Tell me, what moved thee to come to Jesus

Christ ? Men do not usually come or go to this or that place, before they have a *moving cause* ; or rather, a cause moving them thereto ; no more do they come to Jesus Christ (I do not say before they have a cause, but) before that cause moveth them to come. What sayest thou ? Hast thou a cause moving thee to come ? To be at present in a state of condemnation is reason sufficient for men to come to Jesus Christ for life ; but that will not do, except the cause move them ; the which it will never do until their eyes be opened, to see themselves in that condition. For it is not a man's being under wrath, but his seeing it, that moves him to come to Jesus Christ. Alas ! all men, by sin, are under wrath, yet but few of all come to Jesus Christ. And the reason is, because they do not see their condition : *Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come.* Matt. iii. 7. Until men are warned, and also receive warning, they will not come to Jesus Christ.

Take three or four instances for this.

1. Adam and Eve came not to Jesus Christ until they received the alarm ; the conviction of their undone state by sin. Gen. iii.

2. The children of Israel cried not out for a mediator, before they saw themselves in danger of death by the law. Exod. xx. 18, 19.

3. Before the publican came, he saw himself lost and undone. Luke xviii. 13.

4. The prodigal came not, until he saw death at the door ready to devour him. Luke xv. 17, 18.

5. The three thousand came not, until they

knew not what to do to be saved. Acts ii. 37-39.

6. Paul came not, until he saw himself lost and undone. Acts ix. 3-11.

7. Lastly. Before the goaler came, he saw himself undone. Acts xvi. 29-31. And I. tell thee, it is an easier thing to persuade a well man to go to the physician for cure; or a man without hurt, to seek a plaster to cure him, than it is to persuade a man that sees not his soul-disease, to come to Jesus Christ: *the whole have no need of a physician*; then, why should they go to him? The full pitcher can hold no more; then why should it go to the fountain? And if thou comest full, thou comest not aright; and be sure Christ will send thee empty away; *but he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds*. Mark ii. 17; Ps. cxlvii. 3.

Thirdly. Art thou coming to Jesus Christ? Tell me, what thou seest in him, to allure thee to forsake all the world to come to him? I say, what hast thou seen in him? Men must see something in Jesus Christ, else they will not come to him.

1. What comeliness hast thou seen in his person? Thou comest not, if thou seest no form nor comeliness in him. Isa. liii. 2, 3.

2. Until those mentioned in the Song of Solomon were convinced, that there was more beauty, comeliness, and desirableness in Christ, than in ten thousand, they did not so much as ask where he was, nor incline to turn aside after him. Cant. chap. 5. and 6.

There be many things on this side heaven,

that can and do carry away the heart; and so will do, so long as thou livest, if thou shalt be kept blind, and not be admitted to see the beauty of the Lord Jesus.

Fourthly. Art thou come to the Lord Jesus? What hast thou found in him, since thou camest to him?

Peter found with him the word of eternal life. John vi. 68.

They that Peter makes mention of, found him a living stone, even such a living stone as communicated life to them. 1 Pet. ii. 6.

Christ says that they who come to him shall find rest unto their souls. Hast thou found rest in him for thy soul? Matt. xi. 29.

Let us go back to the times of the Old Testament.

First. Abraham found that in him which made him leave his country for him, and become for his sake a pilgrim and stranger in the earth. Gen. xii. 1, 3; Heb. xi. 8.

Secondly. Moses found that in him, which made him forsake a crown, and a kingdom too, for him.

Thirdly. David found so much in him, that he esteemed one day in his house better than a thousand; yea, to be a door-keeper therein, was better than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

Fourthly. What did Daniel and the three children find in him, to make them run the hazards of the fiery furnace, and the den of lions, for his sake? Dan. v. 23; vi. 23.

Let us come down to martyrs.

First. Stephen found that in him, that made him joyfully and quietly yield up his life for his name. Acts vii. 55-60.

Secondly. Ignatius found that in him, that made him choose to go through the torments of the devil, and hell itself, rather than not to have him. Acts and Monuments, vol. iv. p. 25.

Thirdly. What saw Romanus in Christ, when he said to the raging emperor, who threatened him with fearful torment, "Thy sentence, O emperor, I joyfully embrace, and refuse not to be sacrificed by as cruel torments as thou canst invent." Ib. p. 116.

Fourthly. What saw Menas, the Egyptian, in Christ, when he lay under the most cruel torments? "There is nothing in my mind that can be compared to the kingdom of heaven; neither is all the world, if it was weighed in a balance, to be compared with the price of one soul. Who is able to separate us from the love of Jesus Christ our Lord? And I have learned of my Lord and King, not to fear them that kill the body." Ib. p. 117.

Fifthly. What did Eulaliah see in Christ, when she said, as they were pulling her one joint from another, "Behold, O Lord, I will not forget thee. What a pleasure is it for them, O Christ! that remember thy triumphant victory!" Ib. p. 121.

Sixthly. What do you think did Julietta see in Christ when, at the emperor's telling her, "that except she would worship the gods she should never have protection, laws, judgments, nor life," she replied, "Farewell, riches; welcome, poverty. All that I have, if it were a

thousand times more, would I give, rather than to speak one wicked and blasphemous word against my Creator?" Ib. p. 123.

Seventhly. What did Marcus Arethusius see in Christ when, after his enemies had cut his flesh, anointed it with honey, and hanged him up in a basket, for flies and bees to feed on, he exclaimed, "He would not give (to uphold idolatry) one half-penny to save his life." Ib. p. 123.

But what need I thus give particular instances of words and smaller actions, when the love Christians bear to Christ has been shown, by their blood, their enduring hunger, sword, fire, pulling asunder, and all the torments that the devil and hell could devise?

What hast thou found in him, sinner?

What! Come to Christ and find nothing in him, when all things that are worth looking for are in him, or, if any thing, yet not enough to wean thee from thy sinful delight and fleshly lusts? Away; thou art not come to Jesus Christ.

He that is come to Jesus Christ, hath found in him that, as I said, which is not to be found any where else: as,

First. He that is come to Christ, hath found God in him reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses to them: and so God is not to be found in heaven and earth besides. 2 Cor. v. 19.

Secondly. He that is come to Jesus Christ, hath found in him a fountain of grace, sufficient not only to pardon sin, but to sanctify the soul, and to preserve it from falling in this evil world.

Thirdly. He that is come to Jesus Christ,

hath found virtue in him : such virtue, that if he does but touch thee with his word, or thou him by faith, life is forthwith conveyed into thy soul. It makes thee wake, as one that is waked out of his sleep : it awakes all the powers of the soul. Ps. xxx. 11, 12 ; Cant. vi. 12.

Fourthly. Art thou come to Jesus Christ ? Thou hast found glory in him, glory that surmounts and goes beyond : “Thou art more glorious than the mountains of prey.” Ps. xxvi. 4.

Fifthly. What shall I say ? Thou hast righteousness in him ; thou hast found rest, peace, delight, heaven, glory, and eternal life.

Sinner, be advised ; ask thy heart again, saying, Am I come to Jesus Christ ? for upon this one question, *Am I come* or *am I not*, hang heaven and hell, as to thee. If thou canst say, *I am come*, happy, happy man art thou ! But if thou art *not come*, what can make thee happy ? Yea, what can make that man happy, that for his not coming to Jesus Christ for life, must be damned in hell ?

ENCOURAGEMENT FOR THE COMING SINNER.

Coming sinner, I have now a word for thee : be of good comfort, “He will in nowise cast out.” Of all men, thou art the blessed of the Lord ; “The Father hath prepared his Son to be a sacrifice for thee, and Jesus Christ, thy Lord, is gone to prepare a place for thee.” John i. 29 ; Heb. x.

What shall I say to thee ? Thou comest where thou canst not want any thing, for soul,

or body, for this world, or that to come, but it is to be had in or by Jesus Christ.

As it is said of the land that the Danites went to possess ; so, and with much more truth, it may be said of Christ, He is such a one, with whom there is no want of any good thing that is in heaven or earth.

A full Christ is thy Christ.

First. He is full of grace ; grace is sometimes taken for love : never any loved like Jesus Christ. Jonathan's love went beyond the love of women ; but the love of Christ *passes knowledge*. It is beyond the love of all the earth, of all creatures, even of men and angels. His love prevailed with him to lay aside his glory, to leave the heavenly place, to clothe himself with flesh, to be born in a stable, to be laid in a manger, to live a poor life in the world, to take upon him our sicknesses, infirmities, sins, curse, death, and the wrath that was due to man. And all this he did for a base, undeserving, unthankful people ; yea, for a people that was at enmity with him. " For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die ; yet peradventure for a good man, some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son ; much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life." Rom v. 6-10.

Secondly. He is full of truth, full of grace and truth. Truth, that is, faithfulness in keeping promise, even this of the text, (with all other,) *I will in nowise cast out.* Hence it is said, that his words are true, and that he is the faithful God, that keepeth covenants. And hence it is also that his promise is called truth, thou wilt fulfil thy truth unto Jacob and thy mercy unto Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old. Therefore it is said again, that both himself and words are truth: "I am the truth—the Scripture of truth—thy word is truth—thy law is truth—and my mouth, saith he, shall speak truth." John xiv. 7; xvii. 17; Dan. x. 21; 2 Sam. vii. 28; Prov. viii. 7; Ps. cxix. 142; Eccles. xii. 10; Isa. xxv. 1; Mal. ii. 2; Acts xxvi. 25; 2 Tim. ii. 12, 13.

Now I say, his word is truth, and he is full of truth to fulfil his truth, even to a thousand generations. Coming sinner, he will not deceive thee; come boldly to Jesus Christ.

Thirdly. "He is full of wisdom: he is made unto us of God's wisdom:" Wisdom to manage the affairs of his Church in general, and the affairs of every coming sinner in particular. And upon this account he is said to be head over all things, 1 Cor. i. 30; Eph. i. 22. Because he manages all things that are in the world by his *wisdom*, for the good of his church; all men's actions, all Satan's temptations, all God's providences, crosses, and disappointments; all things whatever are under the hand of Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and he ordereth them all for good to his church; and if Christ can help it,

(and be sure he can,) nothing shall happen or fall out in the world, but it shall, in despite of all opposition, have a good tendency to his church and people.

Fourthly. He is full of spirit to communicate to the coming sinner: he has therefore received it without measure, that he may communicate it to every member of his body, according as every man's measure thereof is allotted him by the Father. Wherefore he saith, that he that comes to him, "out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." John iii. 34; Tit. iii. 5, 6; John vii. 38.

Fifthly. He is indeed a storehouse, full of all the graces of the Spirit: "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace." Here is more faith, more love, more sincerity, more humility, more of every grace, and of this, even more of this he giveth to every lowly, humble, penitent, coming sinner. Wherefore, coming soul, thou comest not to a barren wilderness, when thou comest to Jesus Christ. John i. 16.

Sixthly. He is full of bowels and compassion; and they shall feel and find it so, that come to him for life. He can bear with thy weakness, he can pity thy ignorance, he can be touched with the feeling of thy infirmities, he can affectionately forgive thy transgressions, he can heal thy backslidings, and love thee freely. His compassions fail not, "And he will not break a bruised reed, nor quench the smoking flax; he can pity those whom no eye pities, and be afflicted in all thy afflictions." Matt. xxvi. 41; Heb. v. 2; ii. 18; Matt. ix. 2; Hos. xiv. 4; Ezek. xvi.

5, 6; Isa. lxiii. 9; Ps. lxxviii. 38; lxxxvi. 15; cxii. 4; Isa. xlii. 3.

Seventhly. Coming soul, the Jesus thou art coming to is full of might and terribleness, for thy advantage. He can suppress all thine enemies. He is the Prince of the kings of the earth. He can bow all men's designs for thy help: He can break all snares laid for thee in the way: He can lift thee out of all difficulties, wherewith thou mayest be surrounded: He is wise in heart, and mighty in power. Every life under heaven is in his hand; yea, the fallen angels tremble before him. And he will save thy life, coming sinner. 1 Cor. i. 24; Rom. viii. 28; Matt. xxviii. 18; Ps. xxvii. 5, 6; Job ix. 4; John xvii. 2; Matt. viii. 29; Luke viii. 28; James ii. 19.

Eighthly. Coming sinner, the Jesus to whom thou art coming, is lowly in heart. He despiseth not any. It is not thy outward meanness, nor thy inward weakness; it is not because thou art poor, or base, or deformed, or a fool, that he will despise thee; he hath chosen the foolish, the base and despised things of this world, to confound the wise and mighty. He will bow his ear to thy stammering prayers; he will understand the meaning of thy inexpressible groans; he will respect thy weakest offering, if there be in it but thy heart. Luke xiv. 21; Prov. iv. 4-6; Isa. xxxviii. 14, 15; Cant. v. 16; John iv. 27; Mark xii. 33, 34; James v. 11.

Now is not this like a blessed Christ, coming sinner? Art thou not like to fare well when thou hast embraced him, coming sinner? But,

Secondly. Thou hast yet another advantage

by Jesus Christ, who art coming to him ; for he is not only full but free. He is not sparing of what he has. He is open-hearted and open-handed. Let me in a few particulars show thee this :

First. It is evident, because he calls thee. He calls upon thee to come to him : which he would not do, were he not free to give : yea, he bids thee, when come, ask, seek, knock : and for thy encouragement, adds to every command a promise : seek, and ye shall find : ask, and ye shall receive : knock, and it shall be opened unto you. If the rich man should say thus to the poor, would not he be reckoned a free-hearted man ? I say, should he say to the poor, Come to my door, ask at my door, knock at my door, and you shall find and have ; would he not be counted liberal ? And thus doth Jesus Christ. Mind it, coming sinner. Isa. lv. 3 ; Ps. l. 15 ; Matt. vii. 7, 8.

Secondly. He doth not only bid thee come, but tells thee he will heartily do thee good : yea, he will do it with rejoicing. “ I will rejoice over them to do them good, with my whole heart, and with my whole soul.” Jer. xxxii. 41.

Thirdly. It appears that he is free, because he gives freely. He gives to all men liberally, and upbraideth not. James i. 5. There are some that will not deny the poor a favor, but they will mix their mercies with so many taunts, that the persons on whom they bestow their charity, shall find but little sweetness in it. But Christ does not so, coming sinner. He casteth all thine iniquities behind his back : thy sins and iniquities he will remember no more. Isa. xxxviii. 17 ; Heb. viii. 12.

Fourthly. That Christ is free, is manifest by the complaints that he makes against them that will not come to him for mercy: I say, he complains, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." Matt. xxiii. 37. I say he speaks it by way of complaint. He saith also in another place: "But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob." Isa. xliii. 22. Coming sinner, see here the willingness of Christ to save: see here how free he is to communicate life, and all good things, to such as thou art. He complains if thou comest not: he is displeased, if thou callest not upon him.

Hark, coming sinner, once again. When Jerusalem would not come to him for safeguard, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things that belong to thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes." Luke xix. 42.

Fifthly. Lastly, he is open and free-hearted to do thee good, as is seen by the joy and rejoicing that he manifests at the coming home of poor prodigals: He receives the lost sheep with rejoicing; the lost goat with rejoicing. Yea, when the prodigal came home, what joy and mirth, what music and dancing, was in his father's house? Luke xv. 22-25.

Thirdly. Coming sinner, I will add another encouragement for thy help.

First. God has prepared a mercy-seat, a throne of grace, to sit on; that thou mayest come thither to him, and that he may from thence

hear thee, and receive thee. "I will commune with thee (saith he) from above the mercy-seat." Exod. xxv. 22.

As if he should say, Sinner, when thou comest to me, thou shalt find me upon the mercy-seat, where also I am always found by the undone, coming sinner. Thither I bring my pardon, there I hear and receive their petitions, and accept them to my favor.

Secondly. God hath also prepared a golden altar for thee to offer thy prayers and tears upon. A golden altar: It is called a golden altar, to show what worth it is of in God's account; for this golden altar is Jesus Christ: This altar sanctifies thy gift, and makes thy sacrifices acceptable. This altar then makes thy groans golden groans; thy tears, golden tears, and thy prayers, golden prayers, in the eye of that God thou comest to, coming sinner. Rev. viii. 3; Matt. xxiii. 19; Heb. x. 10; 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Thirdly. God hath strewed all the way, from the gate of hell, where thou wast, to the gate of heaven, whither thou art going, with flowers out of his own garden. Behold, how the promises, invitations, calls and encouragements, like lilies, lie round thee. Take heed that thou dost not tread them under foot, sinner. With promises, did I say? Yea, he hath mixed all those with his own name and his Son's name; also with the name of mercy, goodness, compassion, love, pity, grace, forgiveness, pardon, to encourage the coming sinner.

Fourthly. He hath also, for thy encouragement, laid up the names, and set forth the sins

of those that have been saved. In his book they are fairly written, that thou, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, mightest have hope.

In this book is recorded Noah's maim and sin; and how God had mercy upon him.

In this record is fairly written the name of Lot, and the nature of his sin; and how the Lord had mercy upon him.

In this record thou hast also fairly written the names of Moses, Aaron, Gideon, Samson, David, Solomon, Peter, Paul; with the nature of their sins, and how God had mercy upon them, and all to encourage thee, coming sinner.

Fifthly. I will add yet another encouragement for the man that is coming to Jesus Christ. Art thou coming? Art thou coming indeed? Why,

First. Then this thy coming is by virtue of God's call. Thou art called; calling goes before coming: coming is not of works, but of him that calleth. "He went up into a mountain, and called to whom he would, and they came to him." Mark iii. 13.

Secondly. Art thou coming? This is also by the virtue of illumination. God has made thee see, and therefore thou art coming. So long as thou wast in darkness, thou lovedst darkness; and couldst not abide to come, because thy deeds are evil. But being now illuminated and made to see what and where thou art, and also what and where thy Saviour is, now thou art coming to Jesus Christ. "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, (saith Christ,) but my Father which is in heaven." Matt. xvi. 17.

Thirdly. Art thou coming? This is because God has inclined thy heart to come. God hath called thee, illuminated thee, and inclined thy heart to come; and therefore thou comest to Jesus Christ. It is God that worketh in thee to will, and to come to Jesus Christ. Coming sinner, bless God, for that he hath given thee a will to come to Jesus Christ. It is a sign that thou belongest to Jesus Christ; because God has made thee willing to come to him. Ps. cx. 3. Bless God for slaying the enemy of the mind; had he not done it, thou wouldst, as yet, have hated thine own salvation.

Fourthly. Art thou coming to Jesus Christ? It is God that giveth the power; power to pursue thy will in matters of salvation is the gift of God. It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do. Phil. ii. 13. Not that God gives will to come, where he gives no power; but thou shouldst take notice, that power is an additional mercy. The church saw that will and power were two things, when she cried, Draw me, and we will run after thee, (Cant. i. 4.) And so did David too, when he said, I will run the ways of thy commandments when thou shalt enlarge my heart. Will to come, and power to pursue thy will, is double mercy, coming sinner.

Fifthly. All thy strange, passionate, sudden rushings forward after Jesus Christ, (coming sinners know what I mean,) they also are thy helps from God. Perhaps thou feelest at some times, more than at others, strong stirrings up of the heart to fly to Jesus Christ; now thou hast at this time a sweet gale of the Spirit of God, filling

thy sails with the fresh gales of his good Spirit ; and thou ridest at those times, as upon the wings of the wind, being carried out beyond thyself, beyond the most of thy prayers, and also above all thy fears and temptations.

Sixthly. Coming sinner, hast thou not now and then had some blessed words from the lips of Jesus Christ, dropping like a honeycomb upon thy soul to revive thee when thou wast in the midst of despondency ?

Seventhly. Does not Jesus Christ sometimes give thee a glimpse of himself, though perhaps thou seest him but for a moment ?

Eighthly. Hast thou not sometimes, as it were, the very warmth of his wings overshadowing the face of the soul, that gives thee, as it were, a gleam upon thy spirit, as the bright beams of the sun do upon thy body, when it suddenly breaks out of a cloud, though presently all is gone away ?

Well, all these things are the good hand of thy God upon thee, and they are upon thee to constrain, to provoke, and to make thee willing, and able to come, that thou mightest in the end be saved.

THE END.

SELECTED HYMNS.

HYMN 1. C. M.

THERE is a voice of sovereign grace
Sounds from the sacred word;
"Ho! ye despairing sinners, come,
And trust upon the Lord."

My soul obeys th' Almighty call,
And runs to this relief;
I would believe thy promise, Lord,
Oh! help my unbelief.

To the dear fountain of thy blood,
Incarnate God, I fly;
Here let me wash my spotted soul
From crimes of deepest dye.

Stretch out thine arm, victorious King,
My reigning sins subdue;
Drive the old dragon from his seat
With his apostate crew.

A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
On thy kind arms I fall;
Be thou my strength and righteousness,
My Jesus, and my all!

HYMN 2. L. M.

Behold, I stand at the door. Rev. iii. 20.

BEHOLD a stranger at the door!
He gently knocks, has knock'd before;
Hath waited long—is waiting still;
You treat no other friend so ill.

Oh, lovely attitude, he stands
With melting heart and loaded hands!
Oh, matchless kindness! and he shows
This matchless kindness to his foes!

But will he prove a friend indeed?
He will; the very friend you need;
The friend of sinners—yes, 'tis He,
With garments dy'd on Calvary.

Rise, touch'd with gratitude divine ;
 Turn out his enemy and thine,
 That soul-destroying monster sin,
 And let the heavenly stranger in.

Admit him, ere his anger burn,
 His feet departed ne'er return ;
 Admit him, or the hour's at hand,
 You'll at his door rejected stand.

HYMN 3. C. M.

Isa. lv. 1, 2.

LET every mortal ear attend,
 And every heart rejoice !
 The trumpet of the gospel sounds,
 With an inviting voice.

Ho ! all ye hungry, starving souls,
 Who feed upon the wind,—
 And vainly strive, with earthly toys,
 To fill an empty mind :—

Eternal wisdom has prepar'd
 A soul-reviving feast ;
 And bids your longing appetites
 The rich provision taste.

Ho ! ye who pant for living streams,
 And pine away and die ;
 Here, you may quench your raging thirst,
 With springs that never dry.

The happy gates of gospel grace
 Stand open all the day ;
 Lord, we are come to seek supplies,
 And drive our wants away.

HYMN 4. C. M.

Repentance. Zech. xii. 10.

ALAS ! and did my Saviour bleed !
 And did my Sov'reign die ?
 Would he devote that sacred head
 For such a worm as I ?

Was it for crimes, that I had done—
 He groan'd upon the tree ?—

Amazing pity ! grace unknown !
And love beyond degree !

Well might the sun in darkness hide,
And shut his glories in,
When God, the mighty Maker, died
For man, the creature's sin.

Thus might I hide my blushing face,
While his dear cross appears ;
Dissolve, my heart, in thankfulness,
And melt, my eyes, to tears.

But drops of tears can ne'er repay
The debt of love I owe ;
Here, Lord, I give myself away—
'Tis all that I can do.

HYMN 5. L. P. M.

O LOVE divine, what hast thou done !
'The Lord of life hath died for me !
The Father's co-eternal Son
Bore all my sins upon the tree ;
'Th' incarnate God for me hath died
The Lord, my love, was crucified.

Sinners, behold, as ye pass by,
The bleeding Prince of life and peace ;
Come, sinners, see your Saviour die,
And say, was ever grief like his ?
Come, feel with me his blood applied,
The Lord, my love, was crucified :

Is crucified for you and me,
To bring us, rebels, back to God ;
Salvation now for us is free ;
His church is purchas'd with his blood ;
Pardon and life flow from his side ;
The Lord, my love, is crucified.

Then let us sit beneath his cross,
And gladly catch the healing stream ;
All things for him account but dross,
And give up all our hearts to him .
Of nothing speak, or think beside,
The Lord, my love, was crucified.

HYMN 6. 7s.

TO the cross where Jesus dies,
 Where my Lord resigns his breath,
 Where affliction veils his eyes,
 Swimming in the tears of death :
 Thither bringing all my guilt,
 From avenging wrath I flee,
 To the blood of sprinkling spilt—
 Spilt to let the sinner free.

'Mid convulsive agonies,
 Peace his quivering lips impart ;
 Pardon seal'd by broken sighs
 Issuing from a bursting heart ;
 Let me feel this healing power,
 Let this harden'd heart of stone,
 Melt beneath this purple shower,
 From his body trickling down.

On those temples, crown'd with thorns,
 Suff'ring majesty appears ;
 Love that dying face adorns,
 Stain'd with blood, and soil'd with tears ;
 Pierce the shadows of the heart,
 With the light'ning of that eye ;
 Smiles of peace to me impart,
 Let me feel, or I must die !

HYMN 7. L. M.

Intercession. Heb. vii. 25.

HE lives, the great Redeemer lives,
 (What joy the blest assurance gives !)
 And now, before his Father God,
 Pleads the full merit of his blood.

Repeated crimes awake our fears,
 And justice, arm'd with frowns, appears ;
 But in the Saviour's lovely face
 Sweet mercy smiles, and all is peace.

Hence, then, ye black despairing thoughts ;
 Above our fears, above our faults,
 His powerful intercessions rise,
 And guilt recedes, and terror dies.

In every dark distressful hour,
 When sin and Satan join their power,

Let this dear hope repel the dart,
That JESUS bears us on his heart.
Great Advocate, Almighty Friend—
On him our humble hopes depend :
Our cause can never, never fail,
For JESUS pleads and must prevail.

HYMN 8. C. M.

Fountain. Zach. xiii. 1.

THERE is a fountain fill'd with blood,
Drawn from Emmanuel's veins ;
And sinners, plung'd beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.
The dying thief rejoiced to see
That fountain in his day ;
And there may I, as vile as he,
Wash all my sins away.
Dear dying Lamb, thy precious blood
Shall never lose its power,
Till all the ransom'd church of God
Be sav'd to sin no more.
E'er since, by faith, I saw the stream,
Thy flowing wounds supply,
Redeeming love has been my theme,
And shall be—till I die.
Then in a nobler, sweeter song,
I'll sing thy pow'r to save ;
When this poor, lisping, stamm'ring tongue
Lies silent in the grave.

HYMN 9. 8, 7.

Light. Isa. ix. 2.

LIGHT of those whose dreary dwelling
Borders on the shades of death,
Come, and by thy love's revealing,
Dissipate the clouds beneath :
The new heav'n and earth's Creator
In our deepest darkness rise,
Scatt'ring all the night of nature,
Pouring eye-sight on our eyes.
Still we wait for thine appearing ;
Life and joy thy beams impart,

Chasing all our fears, and cheering
 Every poor, benighted heart :
 Come, and manifest the favor
 Thou hast for the ransom'd race ;
 Come, thou glorious God and Saviour !
 Come, and bring the gospel grace,
 Save us, in thy great compassion,
 O thou mild, pacific Prince !
 Give the knowledge of salvation,
 Give the pardon of our sins ;
 By thine all-sufficient merit,
 Every burden'd soul release ;
 Every weary, wand'ring spirit,
 Guide into thy perfect peace.

HYMN 10. 8, 7, 4.

The Surrender.

WELCOME, welcome, dear Redeemer,
 Welcome to this heart of mine ;
 Lord, I make a full surrender,
 Ev'ry pow'r and thought be thine,
 Thine entirely,
 Through eternal ages thine.

Known to all to be thy mansion,
 Earth and hell will disappear ;
 Or in vain attempt possession,
 When they find the Lord is near—
 Shout, O Zion !
 Shout, ye saints, the Lord is here !

HYMN 11. L. M.

The noblest resolution. Josh. xxiv. 15.

MAY I resolve with all my heart,
 With all my pow'rs to serve the Lord ;
 Nor from his precepts e'er depart,
 Whose service is a rich reward.

Oh, be his serviee all my joy !
 Around let my example shine,
 Till others love the blest employ,
 And join in labors so divine.

Be this the purpose of my soul,
 My solemn, my determin'd choice,

To yield to his supreme control,
And in his kind commands rejoice.

Oh, may I never faint, nor tire,
Nor wand'ring, leave his sacred ways;
Great God, accept my soul's desire,
And give me strength to live thy praise.

HYMN 12. L. M.

Self-dedication to God.

LORD, I am thine, entirely thine,
Purchas'd and sav'd by blood divine;
With full consent thine I would be,
And own thy sov'reign right in me.

Grant one poor sinner more a place
Among the children of thy grace;
A wretched sinner, lost to God,
But ransom'd by Immanuel's blood.

Thee, my new Master, now I call,
And consecrate to thee my all;
Lord, let me live and die to thee—
Be thine through all eternity.

HYMN 13. C. M.

Saviour. John iv. 42.

THE Saviour! Oh, what endless charms
Dwell in the blissful sound!
Its influence every fear disarms,
And spreads sweet peace around.

Here pardon, life, and joys divine,
In rich effusion flow,
For guilty rebels, lost in sin,
And doom'd to endless wo.

Oh, the rich depths of love divine,
Of bliss, a boundless store!
Dear Saviour, let me call thee mine;
I cannot wish for more.

On thee alone my hope relies,
Beneath thy cross I fall;
My Lord, my life, my sacrifice,
My Saviour, and my all.

HYMN 14. L. M.

Way to Canaan. John xiv. 6.

JESUS, my all, to heaven is gone,
 He whom I fix'd my hopes upon ;
 His track I see, and I'll pursue
 The narrow way till him I view.

The way the holy prophets went,
 The road that leads from banishment,
 The King's highway of holiness
 I'll go, for all his paths are peace.

This is the way I long have sought,
 And mourn'd because I found it not ;
 My grief, my burden long has been,
 Because I could not cease from sin.

The more I strove against his pow'r,
 I sinn'd and stumbled but the more,
 Till late I heard my Saviour say,
 Come hither, soul, " I am the way."

Lo ! glad I come, and thou, blest Lamb,
 Shalt take me to thee as I am ;
 Nothing but sin I thee can give,
 Nothing but love shall I receive.

Then will I tell to sinners round,
 What a dear Saviour I have found ;
 I'll point to thy redeeming blood,
 And say, " Behold the way to God."

HYMN 15. 8, 7, 4.

Hope encouraged. Ps. xlii. 5.

O MY soul, what means this sadness ?
 Wherefore art thou thus cast down ?
 Let thy griefs be turn'd to gladness ;
 Bid thy restless fears begone ;
 Look to Jesus,
 And rejoice in his dear name.

What though Satan's strong temptations
 Vex and grieve thee day by day ;
 And thy sinful inclinations
 Often fill thee with dismay ;
 Thou shalt conquer—
 Through the Lamb's redeeming blood.

Though ten thousand ills beset thee,
 From without and from within;
 Jesus saith he'll ne'er forget thee,
 But will save from hell and sin :
 He is faithful
 To perform his gracious word.

Though distresses now attend thee,
 And thou treadst the thorny road ;
 His right hand shall still defend thee ;
 Soon he'll bring thee home to God !
 Therefore praise him—
 Praise the great Redeemer's name.

Oh, that I could now adore him,
 Like the heav'nly host above,
 Who for ever bow before him,
 And unceasing sing his love !
 Happy songsters !
 When shall I your chorus join ?

HYMN 16. 8, 7.

Sitting at Jesus' feet.

SWEET the moments, rich in blessing,
 Which before the cross I spend ;
 Life, and health, and peace possessing,
 From the sinner's dying Friend :
 Love and grief my heart dividing,
 With my tears his feet I'll bathe ;
 Constant still in faith abiding,
 Life deriving from his death.

Truly blessed is this station—
 Low before his cross I'll lie ;
 While I see divine compassion
 Floating in his languid eye ;
 Here I'll sit—for ever viewing
 Mercy streaming in his blood :
 Precious drops, my soul bedewing,
 Plead and claim my peace with God.

HYMN 17. S. M.

Salvation by grace. Eph. ii. 5.

GRACE! 'tis a charming sound;
Harmonious to the ear!
Heav'n with the echo shall resound
And all the earth shall hear.

Grace first contriv'd the way
To save rebellious man;
And all the steps that grace display,
Which drew the wondrous plan.

Grace led my roving feet
To tread the heavenly road;
And new supplies each hour, I meet,
While pressing on to God.

Grace all the work shall crown,
Through everlasting days;
It lays in heav'n the topmost stone,
And well deserves the praise.

HYMN 18. C. M.

AMAZING grace! how sweet the sound,
That sav'd a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found—
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears reliev'd;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believ'd.

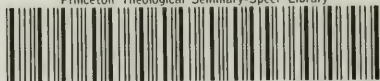
Thro' many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace that brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

And when this flesh and heart shall fail,
And mortal life shall cease;
I shall possess, within the veil,
A life of joy and peace.

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